Development of Catholic Doctrine

Evolution, Revolution, or an Organic Process?

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Venerable John Henry Cardinal Newman: The "Father" of the Second Vatican Council

http://socrates58.blogspot.com/2006/04/venerable-john-henry-cardinal-newman.html

… The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.

(Matthew 13:31–32)

Dedication

To my beloved aunt Dorothy Armstrong (1936–2002), a lovely and caring Christian woman who brought joy and happiness into the lives of all who were privileged to have known her. I shall miss her terribly. May God grant her eternal rest and peace.

Chapter One

1. An Overview of Development of Doctrine: Is it a Corruption of Biblical Teaching?

The Catholic Church defines doctrinal development as a growth of depth and clarity in the *understanding* of the truths of divine revelation. It is important to understand that the *substantial* or *essential* truths at the core of each doctrine (as part of the one apostolic deposit, given from Christ to the apostles) remain unchanged. The Catholic Church preserves this deposit, and is the Guardian of it. Only the subjective grasp of men increases, without the actual doctrine or dogma changing in an essential way. This is the main distinction to keep in mind when considering development.

This increase is the result of the prayerful reflection of the Church, theological study and research (often occasioned by heretical challenges), practical experience, and the collective wisdom of the Church's bishops and popes, especially when joined in Ecumenical Councils.

Like many Christian doctrines, the idea of doctrinal development is based on much implicit or indirect scriptural evidence. The best indications are perhaps Mt 5:17, 13:31–32, Jn 14:26, 16:13, 1 Cor 2:9–16, Gal 4:4, Eph 1:10, 4:12–15. Furthermore, doctrine clearly develops within Scripture itself ("progressive revelation").

Some examples would be: doctrines of the afterlife, the Trinity, the Messiah (eventually revealed as God the Son), the Holy Spirit (a Divine Person in the New Testament), the equality of Jews and Gentiles, bodily resurrection, sacrifice of lambs evolving into the sacrifice of Christ, and so forth. Not a single doctrine emerges in the Bible complete with no further need of development.

In general, whenever Holy Scripture refers to the increasing knowledge and maturity of Christians and the Church, an idea very similar to

doctrinal development is present. Holy Scripture, then, is in no way hostile to development.

The canon of Scripture itself is an example of developing doctrine. The New Testament never informs us which books comprise itself, and its canon (final list of books) took about 360 years to reach its final form (at the Council of Carthage in 397). For instance, the books of Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation were not widely accepted by the Church until 350 A.D.

And books such as Barnabas and 1 and 2 Clement were considered Scripture by many at the same time (for example, the manuscripts Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus). Of the 27 New Testament books, 14 were not mentioned at all until around 200 A.D., including Acts, 2 Corinthians, Galatians and Colossians.

On what grounds, then, can we receive the canon today except on the authority of the Church in the fifth century? Tradition, Church authority, and development were all crucial elements in the very human process of selection of the biblical canon.

It is foolish to assert, then, that the knowledge of what books constitute Scripture is attained simply by an intuitive and subjective inkling within each Spirit-filled person. If the early Church had such a difficult time determining what was and was not Scripture, how could someone many centuries later claim that it was altogether simple for him and every other sincere Christian to determine?

The Church is called the "Body" of Christ often (e.g., Eph 1:22–3), and is compared to a seed that grows into a tree (Mt 13:31–2). Seeds and bodies grow and expand. Yet Protestants tend to see Church and doctrine as more like a statue, subject to pigeon droppings (i.e., so-called Catholic "corruptions"!). This robs the metaphors of Christ of their essential meaning.

It is impossible to claim that no development occurred in Church history, or that it ceased after the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 5th century, etc. (all arbitrary human traditions). The Bible is not absolutely clear in every part, and requires the developing wisdom of the Church.

Doctrines agreed upon by all develop, too. The Divinity or Godhood of Christ was only finalized in 325 at the Council of Nicaea, and the full doctrine of the Trinity in 381 at the Council of Constantinople. The dogma

of the Two Natures of Christ (God and Man) was proclaimed in 451 at the Council of Chalcedon. These decisions of General Councils of the Church were in response to challenging heresies. Why should Protestants accept these authoritative verdicts, but reject similar proclamations on Church government, the Eucharist, Mary, Purgatory, etc.?

Although understanding increases, the essential elements of doctrines exist from the beginning. Today's Church shouldn't be expected to look like the primitive Church if it is a living, vibrant, spiritual organism. But even the early Church looks like a small "Catholic tree." It doesn't look like a Protestant "statue," increasingly corrupted by an encroaching Catholicism, as one common viewpoint would have it.

Venerable John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801–1890), the great English convert to Catholicism, who is widely regarded as one of the most profound religious thinkers of his time, wrote in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845), the one indispensable work on this subject:

> One thing at least is certain; whatever history teaches … at least the Christianity of history is not Protestantism. If ever there were a safe truth, it is this. And Protestantism … as a whole, feels it, and has felt it. This is shown in the determination … of dispensing with historical Christianity altogether, and of forming a Christianity from the Bible alone … To be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant.

The bulk of Newman's extraordinary work is devoted to the exposition of a series of analogies, showing conclusively that a static conception of the Church (both historically and theologically) is incoherent and false. He argues, for example, that notions of suffering, or "vague forms of the doctrine of Purgatory," were universally accepted, by and large, in the first four centuries of the Church, whereas, the same cannot be said for the doctrine of original sin, which is agreed upon by Protestants and Catholics.

Protestants argue that purgatory is a later corruption, yet it was present early on and merely developed. Original sin, however, was equally if not more so, subject to development. One cannot have it both ways. If purgatory is unacceptable on grounds of its having undergone development, then original sin must be rejected with it. Contrariwise, if original sin is accepted notwithstanding its own development, then so

must purgatory be accepted. Thus Protestantism is inconsistent in its selective espousal of Christian beliefs. Newman states, in summary:

> If it be true that the principles of the later Church are the same as those of the earlier, then, whatever are the variations of belief between the two periods, the later in reality agrees more than it differs with the earlier, for principles are responsible for doctrines. Hence they who assert that the modern Roman system is the corruption of primitive theology are forced to discover some difference of principle between the one and the other; for instance, that the right of private judgment was secured to the early Church and has been lost to the later, or again, that the later Church rationalizes and the earlier went by faith.
>
> (*Ibid*., ch. 7, section 6: conclusion)

This is true whether the theological considerations are those agreed upon by all, such as the Divinity of Christ, the Two Natures of Christ, the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, original sin, and the canon of Scripture, or those denied by some or many Protestants, such as the Marian dogmas, purgatory, the papacy, the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the communion of saints, priestly absolution, baptismal regeneration, the Sacrifice of the Mass, etc.

Protestantism introduced a radically new mode of Christian authority that was a departure from the established Christian Tradition: that of subjective, private judgment, tied in with the unbiblical, unhistorical, and unreasonable notion of "Scripture Alone." Protestantism (though, of course, fully Christian) is much more of a "corruption" (insofar as it departs from historical, apostolic precedent) if that word is defined as an essential change of direction or philosophy of an institution or a set of beliefs (in this case theological and spiritual).

One might say that an automobile was "corrupt" if the owner decided that it ran better with no muffler, no shocks, no air or fuel filters, half of its spark plugs, watered-down gas, no rear brakes, one headlight, no heat, three quarts low on oil, with half of its radiator coolant, etc. Corruption can consist of "subtraction" as well as "addition." Protestantism's charges against Catholicism, closely scrutinized, only come back to incriminate itself.

By and large, evangelical Protestantism merely asserts *sola Scriptura* without much consideration of the seriously-flawed implications of the same, and judges all doctrines accordingly. Therefore, those that are deemed to be either outright unbiblical or insufficiently grounded in Scripture to be authoritative, are jettisoned: the Marian doctrines, purgatory, penance, the papacy, etc. Apart from the question of Tradition as a legitimate carrier (alongside and in harmony with Scripture) of Christian belief, much more biblical support can be found in Scripture for these "Catholic" doctrines than Protestants suppose. One simply needs to become familiar with Catholic biblical apologetic arguments.

The idea of doctrinal development is a key, in any case, for understanding why the Catholic Church often appears on the surface as fundamentally different than the early Church. Thoughtful Protestants owe it to themselves and intellectual honesty to ponder this indispensable notion before criticizing the allegedly "unbiblical excesses" of Catholicism.

Protestants often talk about progressive revelation. It is immediately evident that reading Genesis is a lot different from reading, the Gospel of John or St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians. One notes an obvious development of the thought and theology.

It is illustrative to consider, for example, the idea of faith or salvation. God's covenant with Abraham basically involved Abraham's believing in God, which was, as it says in the Bible, "reckoned unto him righteousness." Moving forward through salvation history, we find the notion of the chosen people, which is somewhat like the later concept of election, or enabling grace from God. In other words, it is unmerited. God chose them and gave them grace for His purposes.

God's covenant with David was an eternal covenant. And we also have, of course, in the Old Testament, Moses and the Law and the Ten Commandments. In due course, the notion of a Messiah started to develop in prophetic and post-exilic Judaism. So we observe much development, whereas at first there wasn't much notion of the Incarnation or Jesus at all. The Jews simply didn't have that revelation or information yet.

The messianic motif culminates in Isaiah 53, a description of the "suffering servant," which is an indication of what actually happened on the cross (see also, Psalms 22). So, salvation theology, or soteriology develops all the way through the Old Testament, until the gospel ("good news") is

announced, with John the Baptist and Jesus Himself. Even then Jesus said, "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Mt 5:17). This whole line of salvation theology is a very clear example of development in the Bible itself. Jesus was bringing to a conclusion all the development that had occurred thus far in the Old Testament period and in Judaism.

But neither does development end in the apostolic period. The theology of Christ, or Christology, continued to develop for hundreds of years after Christianity began. Virtually all Christians are agreed on this aspect of theology: the nature of Christ and the Trinity. But many aspects of these doctrines were developments, not explicitly found in the Bible.

Indeed, there is a lot of Scripture that would indicate the Trinity and Christology (Jesus as God), but if one doesn't attempt to put the verses together in a certain systematic way, it wouldn't jump right out from Scripture. So for that reason the Church had to *develop* it—and usually in response to heretics.

So, for example, the heretical Nestorians came around and claimed that Jesus was two persons: human and divine. The Church said "no, that's not true. He is one Person, the God-Man." The Nestorians speculated falsely about the nature of Mary, but the Church pronounced on the doctrine of Mary, against the Nestorians, giving her the title of *Theotokos*, which means "God-bearer," or "Mother of God." That occurred at the Council of Ephesus in 431. We often find, then, in Church history, heretics coming along and making a new claim. The Church reflects upon it, and rules against it.

Christology was further elaborated upon twenty years later, at the council of Chalcedon in 451. This Council promulgated the notion of the Two Natures of Christ and the Hypostatic Union:, that is, Jesus is God and Man, with no separation. That was in response to the Monophysite heresy, which held that Jesus had one nature. The Church ruled that He had Two Natures. And so, on and on, with all the heretics. The Bible itself, in its own example, demonstrates development.

The Church merely continues that process of developing thought. In the parable of the mustard seed (Mt 13:31–32), the kingdom of God is likened to a mustard seed, and it grows into a huge tree. The terminology of "Body of Christ" also implies a living organism; therefore it grows (an increase of

understanding). The Holy Spirit facilitates this growth of understanding and truth. In John 14:26 and 16:13, Jesus says that the Spirit will "teach you all things" and "guide you into all the truth." The Holy Spirit is the *Paraclete*, or Comforter. The Church learns things through the ages. So there is no reason to think that all knowledge will cease after the apostles. We still reflect upon doctrines.

Cardinal Newman argued that the heretics were known for *Scripture Alone*, which is one of the Protestant pillars. They would appeal to Scripture as their ultimate authority, but Newman pointed out that the Church Fathers would appeal not only to Scripture (which they certainly constantly did), but also to the apostolic succession, or Tradition. The Fathers' belief was that whatever is true Christian doctrine, can be shown to have been passed down historically. Later, Fathers like St. Clement or St. Ignatius would be cited, in proof of what the early Church held and taught. *Sola Scriptura* can't be found in the Fathers.

Protestants often picture Christianity or the Church as being something like a great ship. Tradition, as they see it, is like the barnacles underneath the ship. One has to get rid of those; scrape them off. But in actuality, Tradition, rather than being the barnacles on the ship, is much more like its *rudder*, or the guiding principle of the Church, as it passes through the "sea of history," so to speak. So development is the principle of a living, breathing Tradition, guided by the Holy Spirit, and also the consciousness of the Church as a whole.

The canon of Scripture is another example of development of doctrine. Some extreme Protestant views of Scripture or variants of *sola Scriptura* are more or less like Islam, where Mohammed receives the Koran out of heaven. In other words, it's written by God, without the involvement of human beings and Tradition. But, of course, anyone who knows Church history at all knows that's not true, and that the canon of Scripture is a development, that lasted some 350 years. Protestants have a huge problem, of what might be called epistemology. They appeal to *Scripture Alone*, yet Scripture itself talks about Tradition.

The standard Protestant notion of its own origins and place in Church history is that the "Reformers" (in accordance with their very self-proclaimed title) restored what had been lost; what was originally the state of affairs in the early Church. But this itself is a myth: demonstrably false,

since the early Church does not resemble Protestantism much at all, and looks far more like a small "Catholic tree" (e.g., episcopacy, Real Presence, baptismal regeneration, purgatory, priesthood, conciliarism, apostolic succession, penance, prayers for the dead, Mary as the New Eve and perpetual virgin, etc.).

On the other hand, distinctively Protestant tenets such as *sola fide* ("faith alone"), *sola Scriptura* ("Scripture Alone"), private judgment, antipathy to sacramentalism, and sectarianism were virtually nonexistent through Church history, and others were wholly derived from Catholic Tradition (canon of the New Testament, trinitarianism, Christology, angelology, heaven and hell, most moral teaching, etc.).

This being the case, it is difficult to see how Protestantism is a consistent development of Catholicism, except where it retained the doctrines that Catholics had always believed. It is, therefore, only a development in part, of Catholicism. The notion that the Protestant form of Christianity was the essential and earliest manifestation, and Catholicism the corruption cannot be sustained from early Church history, and the fact that Protestantism per se didn't exist until 1517 A.D. Jesus built on what was before. The Church built upon Judaism and then upon its own past, within the framework of apostolic succession and the concepts of apostolic Tradition and an authoritative Church.

That's not to say at all that Catholicism didn't need *reform*—it certainly did, but primarily moral and clerical reform. The early Protestants, however, couldn't bring that about because they wanted to overturn the whole system (or at least their new premises inexorably led to that outcome, whether or not that was their intention) and establish not the primitive Church, but in fact a previously-unknown form of Christianity, built around retained doctrines such as the Trinity and Christology.

The Catholic Church is always reforming: *semper reformanda*. This is why the Catholic Church continues to meet in Ecumenical Councils. Vatican II (1962–65) reformed the liturgy and was an effort to make Catholic Christianity more relevant to the 20th century. It also stressed ecumenism. The Catholic Church had a true Reformation in the 16th century (called by Protestants and secularists the "Counter-Reformation").

There were always reformers in Catholic history, such as St. Bernard, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Catherine, many of whom severely rebuked popes. St. Thomas More and Erasmus—contemporaries of Luther—were reformers, just as unsparing in their criticisms of corrupt practice as Luther, but they stayed faithful to the Church's teachings, and didn't throw the baby out with the dirty bathwater. More upheld the traditional teaching against divorce, and in favor of papal supremacy, and for that noble allegiance he lost his head, courtesy of Henry VIII.

Martin Luther started his dissent in October 1517. Almost three years later, in June 1520, he was asked to retract his false theology within 60 days, and he refused, and burned the papal bull, and so was excommunicated in January 1521. There were debates in the interim. What do critics reasonably expect that the Catholic Church could have done in Luther's case? Do they think it should have agreed that anything goes and that any doctrinal deviation (from its own perspective and point of view) was fine?

No self-respecting Christian institution can do that and survive. All have their own theology and particular set of beliefs, which can't be transformed simply because one man shows up, claiming to have some unique insight from God, over against the entirety of Church history and apostolic Tradition. The Catholic Church is often excoriated today by evangelical critics, for being too tolerant of theological liberals in its midst. It seems, then, that the Catholic Church can't do anything (or very little) right in the eyes of its vociferous critics. This is familiar. Jesus couldn't do anything right in the eyes of certain religious people, either.

In a sense, the Protestant movement did indeed precipitate reforms in the Catholic Church, by decrying excesses and corruption. We have freely admitted that sort of "causation" on their part. God used Nebuchadnezzar and Balaam's ass for His reforming purposes (I'm not trying to be cruse or insulting to Protestants, but I am exaggerating to make a point). That didn't mean Nebuchadnezzar was a Jew, though. Nor were dissenting Protestants truly Catholics any longer, because they no longer accepted the apostolic deposit as the Catholic Church understood and proclaimed it, in its entirety.

Chapter Two

2. Vatican II and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on Development of Doctrine

Development of doctrine is official Catholic teaching: taught at the highest levels of the Magisterium. It is not an optional teaching for Catholics:

VATICAN II: DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON DIVINE REVELATION—(*DEI VERBUM*)

CHAPTER II—HANDING ON DIVINE REVELATION (emphasis added)

7. In His gracious goodness, God has seen to it that what He had revealed for the salvation of all nations would abide perpetually in its full integrity and be handed on to all generations. Therefore **Christ the Lord in whom the full revelation of the supreme God is brought to completion** (see 2 Cor. 1:3; 3:15; 4:6), commissioned the Apostles to preach to all men that Gospel which is the source of all saving truth and moral teaching [1], and to impart to them heavenly gifts. This Gospel had been promised in former times through the prophets, and **Christ Himself had fulfilled it** and promulgated it with His lips. This commission was faithfully fulfilled by the Apostles who, by their oral preaching, by example, and by observances handed on what they had received from the lips of Christ, from living with Him, and from what He did, or **what they had learned through the prompting of the Holy Spirit.**

The commission was fulfilled, too, by those Apostles and apostolic men who under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit committed the message of salvation to writing [2].

But in order to keep the Gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the Apostles left bishops as their successors, "handing over" to them "the authority to teach in their own place" [3]. This sacred tradition, therefore, and Sacred Scripture of both the Old and New Testaments are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God, from whom she has received everything, until she is brought finally to see Him as He is, face to face (see 1 John 3:2).

8. And so the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved by an unending succession of preachers until the end of time. Therefore the Apostles, handing on what they themselves had received, warn the faithful to hold fast to the traditions which they have learned either by word of mouth or by letter (see 2 Thess. 2:15), and to fight in defense of the faith handed on once and for all (see Jud. 3) [4]. Now what was handed on by the Apostles includes everything which contributes toward the holiness of life and increase in faith of the People of God; and hands on to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes.

This tradition which comes from the Apostles develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit [5]. For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (see Luke 2:19, 51), through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth. For **as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfilment in her.**

The words of the holy Fathers witness to the presence of this **living tradition**, whose wealth is poured into the practice and life of the believing and praying Church. Through the same tradition the Church's full canon of the sacred books is known, and **the sacred writings themselves are more profoundly understood and unceasingly made active in her**; and thus God, who spoke of old, uninterruptedly converses with the bride of His beloved Son; and the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel resounds in the Church, and through her, in the world, **leads unto all truth** those who believe and makes the Word of Christ dwell abundantly in them (see Col. 3:16).

CHAPTER VI-SACRED SCRIPTURE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

23. The bride of the Incarnate Word, the Church taught by the Holy Spirit, is concerned to move ahead toward a **deeper understanding of the sacred Scriptures** so that she may increasingly feed her sons with the divine words. Therefore, she also encourages the study of the holy Fathers of both East and West and of the sacred liturgies. Catholic exegetes then and other students of sacred theology, working diligently together and using appropriate means, should devote their energies, under the watchful care of the sacred teaching office of the Church, to an exploration and exposition of the divine writings. This should be so done that as many ministers of the divine word as possible will be able effectively to provide nourishment of the Scriptures for the People of God, to enlighten their minds, strengthen their wills and set men's hearts on fire with the love of God [1]. The sacred Synod encourages the sons of the Church and Biblical scholars to continue energetically, following the mind of the Church, with the work they have so well begun, with a constant renewal of vigour [2].

24. Sacred theology rests on the written Word of God, together with sacred tradition, as its primary and perpetual foundation. By scrutinizing in the light of faith all truth stored up in the mystery of Christ, theology is most powerfully strengthened and **constantly rejuvenated** by that Word. For the sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God and since they are inspired really are the Word of God; and so the study of the sacred page is, as it were, the soul of sacred theology [3]. By the same word of Scripture the ministry of the Word also, that is, pastoral preaching, catechetics and all Christian instruction, in which the liturgical homily must hold the foremost place, is nourished in a healthy way and flourishes in a holy way.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) also has many references to development of doctrine, or similar concepts (emphases added):

66 "The Christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ." [*Dei Verbum* 4; cf. 1 Tim. 6:14; Titus 2:13] **Yet even if Revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit**; it remains for

Christian faith gradually to **grasp its full significance** over the course of the centuries.

91 All the faithful share in understanding and handing on revealed truth. They have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, who instructs them and guides them into all truth.

92 "The whole body of the faithful … cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of faith (sensus fidei) on the part of the whole people, when, from the bishops to the last of the faithful, they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals. "[*Lumen Gentium* 12]

93 "By this appreciation of the faith, aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth, the People of God, guided by the sacred teaching authority (Magisterium), … receives … the faith, once for all delivered to the saints … The People unfailingly adheres to this faith, **penetrates it more deeply** with right judgment, and applies it more fully in daily life. "[*Lumen Gentium* 12; cf. Jude 3]

94 Thanks to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the understanding of both the realities and the words of **the heritage of faith is able to grow** in the life of the Church:—"through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts";[*Dei Verbum* 8:2; cf. Lk 2:19, 51] it is in particular "theological research [which] **deepens knowledge of revealed truth**".[*Gaudium et spes* 62:7; cf. 44:2; *Dei Verbum* 23, 24; *Unitatis redintegratio* 4]—"from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which [believers] experience", [*Dei Verbum* 8:2] the sacred Scriptures "**grow with the one who reads them**."[St. Gregory the Great, *Hom. In Ez.* 1,7,8]-"from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth".[*Dei Verbum* 8:2]

99 Thanks to its supernatural sense of faith, the People of God as a whole never ceases to welcome, to **penetrate more deeply** and to live more fully from the gift of divine Revelation.

158. " 'Faith seeks **understanding**":[St. Anselm, Prosl. prooem] it is intrinsic to faith that a believer desires to know better the One in whom he has put his faith, and to **understand better** what He has revealed; **a more**

penetrating knowledge will in turn call forth a greater faith, increasingly set afire by love. The grace of faith opens "the eyes of your hearts" [Eph 1:18] to a lively **understanding** of the contents of Revelation: that is, of the totality of God's plan and the mysteries of faith, of their connection with each other and with Christ, the centre of the revealed mystery. "The same Holy Spirit constantly perfects faith by his gifts, so that Revelation may be more and more profoundly understood." [*Dei Verbum* 5] In the words of St. Augustine, "I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe." [St. Augustine, Sermo 43, 7, 9]

250. During the first centuries the Church sought to clarify her Trinitarian faith, both to deepen her own **understanding** of the faith and to defend it against the errors that were deforming it. This **clarification** was the work of the early councils, aided by the theological work of the Church Fathers and sustained by the Christian people's sense of the faith.

251. In order to articulate the dogma of the Trinity, the Church had to **develop** her own terminology with the help of certain notions of philosophical origin: "substance," "person" or "hypostasis," "relation" and so on. In doing this, **she did not submit the faith to human wisdom, but gave a new and unprecedented meaning to these terms**, which from then on would be used to signify an ineffable mystery, "infinitely beyond all that we can humanly understand." [Paul VI, *Credo of the People of God*: 2]

1230. This initiation has varied greatly through the centuries according to circumstances. In the first centuries of the Church, Christian initiation saw considerable **development**. Along period of *catechumenate* included a series of preparatory rites, which were liturgical landmarks along the path of catechumenal preparation and culminated in the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation.

1610. Moral conscience concerning the unity and indissolubility of marriage **developed** under the pedagogy of the old law. In the Old Testament the polygamy of patriarchs and kings is not yet explicitly rejected. Nevertheless, the law given to Moses aims at protecting the wife from arbitrary domination by the husband, even though according to the Lord's words it still carries traces of man's "hardness of heart" which was

the reason Moses permitted men to divorce their wives. [Cf. Mt 19:8; Deut 24:1]

2045. Because they are members of the Body whose Head is Christ, [Cf. Eph 1:22] Christians contribute to *building up the Church* by the constancy of their convictions and their moral lives. **The Church increases, grows,** and **develops** through the holiness of her faithful, until "we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."[Eph 4:13; cf. *Lumen Gentium* 39]

2063. "The covenant and dialogue between God and man are also attested to by the fact that all the obligations are stated in the first person ("I am the Lord.") and addressed by God to another personal subject ("you"). In all God's commandments, the *singular* personal pronoun designates the recipient. God makes his will known to each person in particular, at the same time as he makes it known to the whole people:

> The Lord prescribed love towards God and taught justice towards neighbor, so that man would be neither unjust, nor unworthy of God. Thus, through the Decalogue, God prepared man to become his friend and to live in harmony with his neighbor.... The words of the Decalogue remain likewise for us Christians. **Far from being abolished, they have received amplification** and **development** from the fact of the coming of the Lord in the flesh. [St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.*, 4, 16, 3–4]

2421. The social doctrine of the Church developed in the nineteenth century when the Gospel encountered modern industrial society with its new structures for the production of consumer goods, its new concept of society, the state and authority, and its new forms of labor and ownership. The **development of doctrine** of the Church on economic and social matters attests the permanent value of the Church's teaching at the same time as **it attests the true meaning of her Tradition, always living and active**. [Cf. *Centesimus annus* 3]

Other passages in the *Catechism* which might be interpreted as suggesting development of doctrine or spirituality or liturgy, etc., include the following:

892 Papal guidance
126 The Gospels
2675 The Blessed Virgin Mary
1201, 2625, 2671, 2777 Liturgy
2651, 2667 Prayer
2678, 2684 Spirituality
711 Old Testament Prophecies

Chapter Three

3. Fundamental Misunderstandings of Some Fundamentalists Concerning Development

Protestant (and sometimes Orthodox) critics of Catholicism often concentrate on the papacy and its development (or alleged lack of development) as an example of Catholic "excess" and "falsity." Catholics claim that all the elements that flow from the essential aspects of the papacy took time to develop fully. Thus the papacy as we know it today (i.e., post-Vatican I, when papal infallibility was defined) was not present "full-blown" in the first century. This should neither surprise nor scandalize Catholics, as if it were a "difficulty."

The *essence* of the papacy has been there all along, and that is precisely what Catholic apologists and any others who understand the true nature of Newmanian, Vincentian development of doctrine refer to, when they speak of doctrines having been "present from the beginning," or as "part of the apostolic deposit passed on from Jesus to the apostles." Nor is this at all contrary to the teaching of the First Vatican Council, as is claimed by certain Protestant polemicists, who have no case at all, in this instance. The essence of the papacy is Petrine primacy and divinely granted jurisdiction over the Church universal.

These critics claim that Vatican I explicitly renounced development as far as the papacy is concerned. The Council did no such thing. It asserts that the papacy was present from the beginning, so the critics falsely and fallaciously assume that therefore the papacy as understood and practiced post-1870 is being referred to as having been present all along (i.e., the "oak tree" rather than the "acorn"). But this is a circular argument, which assumes what it is trying to prove (i.e., that Catholic teachings are internally-inconsistent).

What was received from the beginning was papal primacy and universal jurisdiction, which is the essence and "seed" of papal infallibility, just as the biblical statement "Jesus is Lord" is the "seed" of the exceedingly complex and highly-philosophical Chalcedonian Christology of 451 A.D. If, therefore, Christology itself—the very doctrine of God—took over 400 years to "sort itself out," so to speak (actually, even longer, as the Monothelite heresy was yet to appear), why not the papacy? In 451, Pope St. Leo the Great was reigning, and was a key figure in determining orthodox Christology (accepted to this day by all three branches of Christianity). The papacy was quite robust and "full-blown" by then, as most historians would agree.

The First Vatican Council—far from *rejecting* it—*embraced* development of doctrine. There can be no question of this whatsoever, as I will now proceed to demonstrate. Here is a portion of the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, ch. 4, "Of Faith and Reason," from *Dogmatic Canons and Decrees* (Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 1977; reprint of 1912 ed. Of authorized translations of the Councils of Trent and Vatican I, Imprimatur by John Cardinal Farley of New York, 232–233):

> Hence, also, that meaning of the sacred dogmas is perpetually to be retained which our holy Mother the Church has once declared; nor is that meaning ever to be departed from, under the pretence or pretext of a deeper comprehension of them (can. iii). Let then the intelligence, science and wisdom of each and all, of individuals and of the whole Church, in all ages and all times, increase and flourish in abundance and vigour; but simply in its own proper kind, that is to say, in one and the same doctrine, one and the same judgment. (29)
>
> 29. Vincent of Lerins, Common. n. 28.

This expresses precisely the Vincentian and Newmanian (and Catholic) understanding of the development of doctrines that remain essentially unchanged. Development is emphatically *not* evolution, which is the transformation or change of one thing into something else. The two concepts are entirely distinct philosophically and linguistically. Pope St. Pius X makes precisely this distinction in a papal encyclical. Here is a second translation of the passage, from *The Christian Faith: Doctrinal*

Documents of the Catholic Church (edited by J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, New York: Alba House, 5th revised and enlarged ed., 1990, 47):

> Hence also that meaning of the sacred dogmas is perpetually to be retained which our Holy Mother Church has once declared, and there must never be a deviation from that meaning on the specious ground and title of a more profound understanding. 'Therefore, let there be growth and abundant progress in understanding, knowledge and wisdom, in each and all, in individuals and in the whole Church, at all times and in the progress of ages, but only within the proper limits, i.e., within the same dogma, the same meaning, the same judgment.' (1)
>
> (1) Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium primum, 23.

Perhaps, in the words of the prison guard in the movie, *Cool Hand Luke*, "what we have here is a failure to *communicate*." There is no conflict whatever between Cardinal Newman's thesis in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* and the above infallible pronouncement of an Ecumenical Council (during his own lifetime, in fact). Vatican I cites St. Vincent of Lerins (died around 450) as a precedent, just as Newman himself had 25 years earlier. It cites the very passage that is—from all accounts—the *classic* exposition of dogmatic development in the Fathers—the very inspiration of Newman to expand upon the notion further. St. Vincent even draws the analogy of the organic growth of bodies, using a metaphor ("seed") which is the same notion as the "acorn and the oak tree" which so many critics of Catholicism object to.

Lastly, I present the excerpt from St. Vincent of Lerins which Vatican I cited (*Notebooks*, 23:28–30), from yet another translation (William A. Jurgens, editor and translator, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, three volumes, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, vol. 3, 1979, 265). I will provide the context, with the portion utilized by Vatican I in **bold** print. Note that by citing this passage—given the explicit context—Vatican I is implicitly and beyond doubt giving sanction to the notion of doctrinal development. It is expressly denying that Catholic doctrine (including, by extension, the papacy) starts as an "oak tree" rather than as a seed or acorn:

> [28] But perhaps someone is saying: 'Will there, then, be no progress of religion in the Church of Christ?' Certainly there is, and the greatest.

> For who is there so envious toward men and so exceedingly hateful toward God, that he would try to prohibit progress? But it is truly progress and not a change of faith. What is meant by progress is that something is brought to an advancement within itself; by change, something is transformed from one thing into another. **It is necessary, therefore, that understanding, knowledge and wisdom grow and advance strongly and mightily as much in individuals as in the group, as much in one man as in the whole Church, and this gradually according to age and the times; and this must take place precisely within its own kind, that is, in the same teaching, in the same meaning, and in the same opinion.** [29] The progress of religion in souls is like the growth of bodies, which, in the course of years, evolve and develop, but still remain what they were … [30] … Although in the course of time something evolved from those first seeds and has now expanded under careful cultivation, nothing of the characteristics of the seeds is changed. Granted that appearance, beauty and distinction has been added, still, the same nature of each kind remains.

If this weren't enough of a striking disproof of claims that Vatican I opposes doctrinal development, in the same work, St. Vincent expresses his famous dictum (often cited by Protestant polemicists *against* development):

> In the Catholic Church herself every care must be taken that we may hold fast to that which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all. For this is, then truly and properly Catholic …
>
> (*Notebooks*, 2,3. Jurgens, *ibid*., vol. 3, 263)

Obviously, unchanging essence and developing, progressing non-essential elements are compatible, according to St. Vincent, Cardinal Newman, and Vatican I. Here we have almost all the elements outlined by Newman fourteen centuries later, yet Protestant controversialists continue to claim that Newman's views were a radical departure from Catholic precedent!

To establish the fact that St. Vincent of Lerins is a key figure in the "development of development of doctrine," I shall now cite Pope St. Pius X and well-known Protestant Church historian Philip Schaff:

28. It is thus, Venerable Brethren, that for the Modernists, whether as authors or propagandists, there is to be nothing stable, nothing immutable in the Church. Nor, indeed, are they without forerunners in their doctrines, for it was of these that Our predecessor Pius IX wrote: "These enemies of divine revelation extol human progress to the skies, and with rash and sacrilegious daring would have it introduced into the Catholic religion as if this religion were not the work of God but of man, or some kind of philosophical discovery susceptible of perfection by human efforts."[14] On the subject of revelation and dogma in particular, the doctrine of the Modernists offers nothing new. We find it condemned in the Syllabus of Pius IX, where it is enunciated in these terms: "Divine revelation is imperfect, and therefore subject to continual and indefinite progress, corresponding with the progress of human reason";[15] and condemned still more solemnly in the Vatican Council: "The doctrine of the faith which God has revealed has not been proposed to human intelligences to be perfected by them as if it were a philosophical system, but as a divine deposit entrusted to the Spouse of Christ to be faithfully guarded and infallibly interpreted. Hence also that sense of the sacred dogmas is to be perpetually retained which our Holy Mother the Church has once declared, nor is this sense ever to be abandoned on plea or pretext of a more profound comprehension of the truth."[16] Nor is the development of our knowledge, even concerning the faith, barred by this pronouncement; on the contrary, it is supported and maintained. For the same Council continues: "Let intelligence and science and wisdom, therefore, increase and progress abundantly and vigorously in individuals, and in the mass, in the believer and in the whole Church, throughout the ages and the centuries—but only in its own kind, that is, according to the same dogma, the same sense, the same acceptation."[17]

(Pope St. Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, "On the Doctrine of the Modernists," 8 September 1907, section 28)

Thus, the very pope who is known for his opposition to theological modernism, or liberalism—in his famous encyclical on that subject—, cites the same passage from Vatican I which I have noted, including the citation from St. Vincent (which is at the very end). He contends that

development of doctrine is neither "evolution" (which he contrasts to it) nor modernism. By straightforward logical extension, then, he is verifying that Vatican I upheld development of doctrine (as explicated by St. Vincent and more recently in the same sense by Cardinal Newman) as entirely orthodox and Catholic.

He states this outright: "Nor is the *development* of our knowledge, even concerning the *faith*, barred by this pronouncement; on the contrary, it is *supported* and maintained." Nothing could be clearer. The papacy, then, is but one of many doctrines contained in "the faith" and the apostolic deposit. It develops like all the other dogmas, and like all the beliefs in Protestantism as well—including the canon of Scripture itself.

> Augustine … manifestly acknowledges a gradual advancement of the church doctrine, which reaches its corresponding expression from time to time through the general councils; but a progress within the truth, without positive error … In like manner Vincentius Lerinensis teaches, that the church doctrine passes indeed through various stages of growth in knowledge, and becomes more and more clearly defined in opposition to ever-rising errors, but can never become altered or dismembered.
>
> (*History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3: *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity*, Philip Schaff, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974 [orig. 1910], 344; see also Protestant historian J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, rev. ed., 1978, 50–51)

The Anglican George Salmon's *The Infallibility of the Church* (originally 1888) remains to this day an inspiration for the anti-infallibility, anti-development arguments of Protestant contra-Catholic polemicists. Yet Salmon in his book exhibited a profoundly biased ignorance not only concerning papal infallibility, but also with regard to even the basics of the development of doctrine:

> Romish advocates … are now content to exchange tradition, which their predecessors had made the basis of their system, for this new foundation of development … The theory of development is, in short, an attempt to enable men, beaten off the platform of history, to hang on to it by the eyelids … The old theory was that the teaching of the Church had never varied.

(*The Infallibility of the Church*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House [originally 1888], 31–33; cf. also 35, 39)

Here Salmon (like his polemical followers today) is quixotically fighting a straw man of his own making and seeking to force his readers into the acceptance of a false and altogether logically unnecessary dichotomy: namely, that development of doctrine implies change in the *essence* or *substance* of a doctrine and therefore is utterly contrary to the claims of the Church to be the *Guardian* and *Custodian* of an authoritative tradition of never-changing dogma.

But this is emphatically *not* the Catholic belief, nor that of Newman, to whom Salmon was largely responding. Nor is it true that development was a "new" theory introduced by Cardinal Newman into Catholicism, while the "old theory" was otherwise. This is unanswerably proven by the writing of St. Vincent of Lerins (itself paralleled by St. Augustine and other Fathers well familiar with the orthodox notion of development—see chapter 8).

When Vatican I or a pope or any Catholic refers to the papacy as the "constant belief" of the Church, he is expressing himself no differently than a Protestant who states that "the divinity of Christ has always been believed," or "the Trinity was always believed," or the New Testament was always accepted by first-century Christians, when they know full well (if they know their Church history at all) that the doctrines of God (trinitarian theology) and especially Christ (Christology) also underwent much development (Two Natures, Athanasian Creed, *Theotokos*, battles with heretics such as the Monothelites, Arians, and Sabellians) while at the same time remaining the same in essence.

Likewise, a *total* consensus about the New Testament did not exist until the canon was finalized in the late fourth century. Yet Scripture was what it was all along: inspired and God-breathed. The Church did not *make* it so (as Vatican I itself explicitly affirms). Protestants, in speaking of the broad consensus of the early Fathers with regard to the canon of Scripture, are basically asserting the "unanimous consent of the Fathers" in a fashion similar to the way a Catholic would argue. Likewise, the papacy was what it was, all along, even if not all recognized it. Not all recognized Jesus as the Messiah and Lord, either. That is no disproof.

Chapter Four

4. How Cardinal Newman Convinced me of the Apostolicity of the Catholic Church

As a committed evangelical Protestant with a great respect for the history of Christian doctrine, I subscribed to a fairly widespread non-Catholic view of Church history: a vague, ethereal, semi-legendary conception of the early Church as quasi-Protestant, and lacking those elements that are now termed "Catholic distinctives." If the early Christians weren't technically and exhaustively Protestant (as defined theologically and ecclesiologically by the revolutionary movement in the 16th century), they certainly (in the main, anyway) weren't Catholic—or so I had casually assumed.

Many Protestants (particularly evangelicals) date the downfall of the early Church at 313, with the conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine and the subsequent "paganization" of institutional Christianity. Others will place this alleged calamitous event around 440, with the beginning of the papal reign of Pope St. Leo the Great, who—in the eyes of many Protestant historians—was the first pope in the full-blown jurisdictional sense (however that is defined by these same historians).

Still another school of thought believes that the derailing of the young Christian Church occurred soon after the last apostle's death and the cessation of the writing of New Testament books, around the year 100, or else sometime during the course of the second century A.D. at the latest.

This whole endeavor to date the "apostasy" of institutional, historic Christianity is reminiscent of arbitrary attempts to maintain that human life or personhood in the womb begins at a time other than conception, which is clearly the determinative biological event. It simply can't be done with any logical or historiographical rigor. The Church, like a human soul

and body in the womb, organically develops from the beginning in a gradual, consistent fashion, and it is altogether futile to try and assign a date to its supposed demise. Like the preborn child, the essence is there from the first.

Intuitively sensing this, I myself took a more complex, nuanced view that the ostensible "Church" was truly Christian all through this period, down through the early Middle Ages, up to the period of the Inquisition and Crusades (roughly 1100–1500), at which time it did, however, lose much of its integrity and moral authority, if not the title and claim "Christian" altogether. I was reluctant to go the whole way and deny that Catholicism was Christian, because I knew too much about what it had always taught on the "central doctrines" of Christianity, such as the Trinity and all the Christological doctrines, and its indispensable role in preserving both medieval culture and the Bible itself.

To deny Christian status to Catholicism at any point of its development would be to cut off the limb on which Protestantism sits: in effect, this would logically reduce to a very curious and self-defeating standpoint that Christianity is not an historical religion by its very nature.

Rather, I believed that the Catholic Church had "passed the baton," so to speak, to the Protestants in the sixteenth century, who succeeded in reforming the Church universal. In other words, I held to an "organic" conception of Church history, somewhat like the Protestant Church historian Philip Schaff, and many Reformed, Anglican and Lutheran theologians and historians, whereby Protestantism was a legitimate development of, heir to, and legatee of, historic Catholicism.

Henceforth, in my thinking, Protestantism became the superior and more "biblical" form of Christianity, since the Catholic Church had "obviously" compromised itself both morally and theologically with its reactionary and extremely harsh, "un-ecumenical" Council of Trent in the sixteenth century.

This was the background of my ecclesiological thinking when, in early 1990, I began to moderate an ecumenical discussion group in my home. A friend of mine, John McAlpine, whom I had met in the pro-life movement —a great conversationalist—, stunned me one night when he claimed that the Catholic Church had never contradicted itself in any of its dogmas. This, to me, was self-evidently incredible and *a priori* implausible, and so I

embarked immediately on a research project designed to debunk once and for all this far-fetched notion that any Christian body could even claim infallibility, let alone actually possess it.

During the course of this study, I gleefully discovered many of the standard "anti-infallibility" works, which are cited again and again: the Anglican George Salmon's *The Infallibility of the Church* (1888), Johann von Dollinger's *Letters of Janus* and *Letters of Quirinus* (1869–1870) and Hans Kung's *Infallible?: An Inquiry* (1971).

I was amused recently by the accusation of a prominent professional anti-Catholic (I define that as one who denies that Catholicism is a form of Christianity), that I must have never been familiar with the best Protestant arguments against infallibility and Catholicism in general—hence my eventual conversion on flimsy grounds! The truth was quite otherwise: the above works are the cream of the crop of this particular line of thought. Church historian Dollinger's heretical opinions are also often utilized by Eastern Orthodox polemicists as arguments against papal infallibility. I know this well as a result of my own dialogues with Orthodox Christians over the Internet.

It is beyond our purview here to examine the faulty and jaundiced reasoning employed by the above-cited "anti-infallibility" works, and my own ambitious and zealous adoption of them, in my effort to refute the Catholic Church on historical grounds. Suffice it to say that it is largely a matter of misunderstanding or misapplying the true doctrine of infallibility, as defined dogmatically by the First Vatican Council in 1870, or else a conveniently selective and dishonest presentation of historical facts and patristic citations. These practices run rampant throughout the current anti-Catholic literature, and always have. And I, too, was guilty of it. Bias has a way of blinding one to even basic logical errors.

The First Vatican Council of 1870 defined papal infallibility as follows:

> We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks ex cathedra, that is, when, in discharge of the office of pastor and teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, is, by the divine assistance promised to him in Blessed Peter, possessed of that infallibility with

> which the divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that, therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, irreformable.

Thus, the conciliar definition was careful to limit absolute infallibility to very specific and strict parameters, and it is these which anti-Catholic polemicists almost always overlook or distort when bringing to the table such famous examples of supposed papal fallibility as Honorius, Vigilius and Liberius. None of them succeed when subjected to the proper historical and logical scrutiny. They only "work" when presented in isolation without the Catholic counter-replies that reveal their utter inadequacy.

Furthermore, the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) did not change this teaching in the slightest, despite the claims of heterodox self-proclaimed "Catholics" and misinformed non-Catholics and nominal, undereducated Catholics. Referring to the decree on the Pope from Vatican I, the Council declared:

> This teaching concerning the institution, the permanence, the nature and import of the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his infallible teaching office, the sacred synod proposes anew to be firmly believed by all the faithful … The college or body of bishops has for all that no authority unless united with the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, as its head, whose primatial authority, let it be added, over all, whether pastors or faithful, remains in its integrity. For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, namely, and as pastor of the entire Church, has full, supreme and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered. The order of bishops is the successor to the college of the apostles in their role as teachers and pastors, and in it the apostolic college is perpetuated. Together with their head, the Supreme Pontiff, and never apart from him, they have supreme and full authority over the Universal Church; but this power cannot be exercised without the agreement of the Roman Pontiff. The Lord made Peter alone the rock-foundation and the holder of the keys of the Church (cf. Mt. 16:18–19) …

(*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, chapter III: "The Church is Hierarchical," sections 18, 22. From edition / translation by Austin Flannery: Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 1988 revised ed., 370,375)

I proceeded (in 1990, as an evangelical Protestant) with my hostile research, cavalierly assuming beforehand that the early Church was much more Protestant than Catholic, and that the Catholic Church had become corrupt over time (even while technically remaining Christian by the minimalist, Protestant criterion of "central doctrines"). Such is the standard view of Protestants, especially those most in line with "Reformation thought." They assume, usually almost without any direct analysis, that the Catholic Church has added to the Christian faith, that faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

My Catholic friend John, confronted with the mass of jaded, highly selective historical evidence I had compiled, and my relentless polemics, was understandably frustrated. He kept urging me to read John Henry Cardinal Newman's *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. What little familiarity I had with Newman had shown me that he was a very impressive figure. I knew that he was a brilliant Church historian, and highly respected by all, regardless of theological affiliation.

So I started reading the *Essay* in October 1990, after having been somewhat "softened" in the previous months by my reading of Catholic books by the cultural historian Christopher Dawson, pro-life heroine Joan Andrews, the famous Trappist monk and convert Thomas Merton, and the marvelous, unparalleled summary *The Spirit of Catholicism* by Karl Adam, which has been described by Lutheran historian Jaroslav Pelikan as the best single volume written for the purpose of explicating and defending Catholicism. The timing—in God's Providence, and in retrospect—was perfect.

A few months before, I had also concluded, as a result of intense discussions in my ecumenical group, that the Catholic Church possessed the highest and most sublime moral theology of any Christian group. Furthermore, I had been convinced (around July 1990) of the wrongness of contraception, after involved arguments and the dumbfounded realization that all Christians of all types had opposed it until 1930, when the

Anglicans adopted it at their Lambeth conference for "hard cases" only. This was my first overt change of opinion, but little did I suspect what was yet to come.

The *Essay* was probably the most appropriate and relevant work I could have read at that time, regardless of whether I was going to be convinced by it or not. It provided the "best shot" that the Catholic Church was likely to give, in defense of its doctrines which showed marked "growth" (a neutral term) throughout history, to the dismay of Protestants.

Finally, I was now reading some sort of response to the research I had been doing for months, under the influence of thoroughly Protestant presuppositions.

I was quickly intrigued and I looked forward (intellectually) to what Newman was going to say. The very premise of his approach was so novel and curious to me that it guaranteed my continued avid interest.

> So much must the Protestant grant that, if such a system of doctrine as he would now introduce ever existed in early times, it has been clean swept away as if by a deluge … Let him take which of his doctrines he will, his peculiar view of self-righteousness, of formality, … his notion of faith, … his denial of the virtue of the sacraments, or of the ministerial commission, or of the visible Church … the Scriptures as the one appointed instrument of religious teachings and let him consider how far Antiquity, as it has come down to us, will countenance him in it …
>
> That Protestantism, then, is not the Christianity of history, it is easy to determine.
>
> (*An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* [1845; revised 1878], edition published by Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1989, 7–9; top section cited from Newman's work, *Historical Sketches*, vol. 1: *The Church of the Fathers*, London: 1872, 418)

This was clearly now a frontal attack on the entire edifice of my Protestant ecclesiology: a turning of my argument on its head, with the forceful assertion that it was Catholicism, not Protestantism, which had the historical record on its side. And I respected history enough to shudder

at this prospect. I also knew full well that Newman would bring to bear an enormous weight of historical evidence to support his case.

After summary statements such as the above, Newman proceeded to make brilliant specific analogies in order to bring home his point. The first had to do with the doctrine of purgatory, vis-a-vis the doctrine of original sin, which is, of course, accepted by Protestants as well:

> Some notion of suffering, or disadvantage, or punishment after this life, in the case of the faithful departed, or other vague forms of the doctrine of Purgatory, has in its favour almost a consensus of the first four ages of the Church.
>
> (*Ibid.*, 21)

Newman then recounts no less than sixteen Fathers who hold the view in some form. But in comparing this consensus to the doctrine of original sin, we find a disjunction:

> No one will say that there is a testimony of the Fathers, equally strong, for the doctrine of Original Sin.
>
> (*Ibid.*, 21)
>
> In spite of the forcible teaching of St. Paul on the subject, the doctrine of Original Sin appears neither in the Apostles' nor the Nicene Creed.
>
> (*Ibid.*, 23)

This is a crucial distinction. It is a serious problem for Protestantism that it by and large inconsistently rejects doctrines which have a consensus in the early Church, such as purgatory, the (still developing) papacy, bishops, the Real Presence, regenerative infant baptism, apostolic succession, and intercession of the saints, while accepting others with far less explicit early sanction, such as original sin. Even many of their own foundational and distinctive doctrines, such as the notion of Faith Alone (*sola fide*), or imputed, extrinsic, forensic justification, are well-nigh nonexistent all through Church history until Luther's arrival on the scene.

On the other hand, Protestants clearly accept developing doctrine on several fronts: the canon of the New Testament is a clear example of such a (technically "non-biblical") doctrine, as well as the divinity of Christ, the

fully worked-out doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the Two Natures of Christ (God and Man), all in Ecumenical Councils which are accepted by most Protestants. So development is an unavoidable fact for both Protestants and Catholics.

The trick for Protestants (granting Church history an important and legitimate role, whether it is considered normative and authoritative or not), is to determine a non-arbitrary rationale for accepting some doctrines while rejecting others. It will not do to simply say that certain doctrines are "unbiblical" and thus unworthy of Protestant allegiance, since it must immediately be explained why the majority of early Christians believed in them, and why beliefs such as the canon of the New Testament and *Scripture Alone* are adopted despite the absence of biblical rationale, or why (chances are) many other strands of Protestantism disagree with the one making the claim, when Scripture is allegedly so "clear" and able to be interpreted in the main without difficulty by the layman. Newman writes, regarding the New Testament Canon:

> As regards the New Testament, Catholics and Protestants receive the same books as canonical and inspired; yet … the degrees of evidence are very various for one book and another … For instance, as to the Epistle of St. James … Origen, in the third century, is the first writer who distinctly mentions it among the Greeks and it is not quoted by name by any Latin till the fourth … Again: The Epistle to the Hebrews, though received in the East, was not received in the Latin Churches till St. Jerome's time … Again, St. Jerome tells us, that in his day, towards A.D. 400, the Greek Church rejected the Apocalypse, but the Latin received it. Again: The New Testament consists of twenty-seven books … Of these, fourteen are not mentioned at all till from eighty to one hundred years after St. John's death, in which number are the Acts, 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, and James. Of the other thirteen, five, viz. St. John's Gospel, Philippians, 1st Timothy, Hebrews, and 1st John, are quoted but by one writer during the same period. On what ground, then, do we receive the Canon as it comes to us, but on the authority of the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries?… The fifth century acts as a comment on the obscure text of the centuries before it.

(*Ibid.*, 123–126)

Newman makes another brilliant analogy between the "lateness" of the development of the papacy and the Marian doctrines, and the Creed and the canon of Scripture:

> Ecclesiastical recognition of the place which St. Mary holds in the Economy of grace … was reserved for the fifth century, as the definition of our Lord's proper Divinity had been the work of the fourth … In order to do honour to Christ, … to defend the true doctrine of the Incarnation … to secure a right faith in the manhood of the Eternal Son, the Council of Ephesus determined the Blessed Virgin to be the Mother of God … The title 'Theotokos,' or Mother of God, was familiar to Christians from primitive times, and had been used, among other writers, by Origen, Eusebius, … St. Athanasius, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Gregory Nyssen.
>
> (*Ibid.*, 145)
>
> If the Imperial power checked the development of Councils, it availed also for keeping back the power of the Papacy. The Creed, the Canon, in like manner, both remained undefined … All began to form, as soon as the Empire relaxed its tyrannous oppression of the Church.
>
> (*Ibid.*, 151)

After consideration, especially, of Newman's analogies between Protestant developments and distinctively Catholic ones, and his "Seven Notes," it became clear to me that Protestantism represented a massive corruption of historical Christianity, rather than a consistent development, as I formerly believed, and my thinking underwent a paradigm shift of massive proportions.

For Protestantism undeniably introduced radically new doctrines such as *sola fide*, *sola Scriptura*, sectarianism, private judgment, the notion of an invisible, non-hierarchical church, and symbolic baptism and Eucharist, which were sheer novelties, rather than reforms, supposedly hearkening back to the alleged state of affairs in the early Church. But they simply cannot be found in the early Church.

Newman builds his case to its climax, with the following lucid comment:

> … the various heresies … have in one respect or other … violated those principles with which she rose into existence, and which she still retains. Thus Arian and Nestorian schools denied the allegorical rule of Scripture interpretation; the Gnostics and Eunomians for Faith professed to substitute knowledge; and the Manichees also … The dogmatic Rule … was thrown aside by all those sects which, as Tertullian tells us, claimed to judge for themselves from Scripture; and the Sacramental principle was violated, ipso facto, by all who separated from the Church … In like manner the contempt of mystery, of reverence, of devoutness, of sanctity, are other notes of the heretical spirit. As to Protestantism it is plain in how many ways it has reversed the principles of Catholic theology.
>
> (*Ibid.*, 354)

In other words, the early heretics were the ones who usually operated on the basis of the so-called perspicuity, or clearness of Scripture, without authoritative interpretation by authoritative ecclesiastical bodies. Protestants look back today with the benefit of hindsight and speak of the "early Church" or simply, "the Church," yet fail to recognize that this "Church" which they tacitly assume was one and unified, is none other than the organically-connected ancestor of the present-day Catholic Church, which operates on the same principles (apostolic succession, a certain understanding of the organic relationship of Church, Bible, and Tradition, sacramentalism, sacerdotalism, papacy, conciliarism, episcopacy, the communion of saints, etc.).

One need not posit an absolute break of continuity in order to equate the present Catholic Church with the "Church" of the early centuries. One need only understand the true nature of development, whereby doctrines can grow in the sense that they are more clearly understood, and more deeply and thoroughly explicated, while not undergoing any essential transformation. But Protestantism requires a radical change of principle, and hence, fails the test of what constitutes a true development, in Newman's analysis.

Furthermore, it is instructive to realize that what we now consider orthodox in early Christianity, is simply the position of the Roman apostolic see, which was proven right again and again on this score, far beyond coincidence, given the multiplicity of heretical sects in the early centuries, and the hundreds of competing Christian denominations today.

This fact and the others recounted above in Newman's *Essay* and my own commentary upon it, are what basically compelled me to become a Catholic (along with the profundity and beauty of unchanging Catholic moral teaching). I had too much respect for logic, historical theology, and Church history to resist what I felt to be an utterly unanswerable argument. I discovered, with the inestimable assistance of Cardinal Newman, that the Catholic Church had far and away the most cogent, consistent claim to ecclesiological and apostolic preeminence.

Chapter Five

5. Various Aspects of Newman's Theory of Development and His Rhetorical and Literary Style

Critics of Catholicism in general and development of doctrine in particular, continue to maintain that development is basically the same thing as *evolution* of doctrine. But it simply—by definition—is *not* "evolution", in any way, shape, or form. Evolution is a transformation of one thing into something else. Development, on the other hand (as Newman defines it, drawing on St. Vincent of Lerins, St. Augustine, and abundant historical indications), is an unfolding of an essential principle of a belief, while the thing itself *remains the same*.

Trinitarianism did not become something else while it developed through Nicaea, Chalcedon, and over against the heresies of Nestorianism, Arianism, Sabellianism, Monophysitism, Monothelitism, and so forth. The *understanding* and nuance "grew," but the *essence* (God in three Persons) did not. Likewise, with the canon of Scripture, or even doctrines such as salvation by God's grace alone, the Resurrection, and the nature of the states of the afterlife, throughout the Old Testament.

Protestants have no trouble with *these* "developments," and they wouldn't dare to mock them as examples of "evolution." It is only when we arrive at Catholic "distinctives," that we hear the charge that Newman's development is being used as a mechanism of special pleading, in order to avoid so-called anomalies of history, and alleged historical disproofs of Catholic institutions such as the papacy or dogmas such as those concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary. For example, one person with whom I dialogued, stated, along these lines, that "development has to be waved like a magic wand all over the historical record."

Development of doctrine might be regarded as a sort of "key" for grasping Catholicism over against Protestantism. In my own opinion, it is difficult for any Protestant to be able to conceptualize (let alone comprehend and accept) Catholicism, without at least a working knowledge or acquaintance of this concept. But as long as Protestant polemicists repeat the "Salmonian" viewpoint of "development as evolution and special pleading in the teeth of history," etc., there is no hope for general Protestant understanding of this crucial Christian idea occurring anytime soon.

What Newman did in his *Essay on Development* was to simply look at the facts of Church history to see if they lined up with his provisional theory of development. Truly, he was seeking to learn the lessons of history. Since Christianity is inherently an historical religion, this as no novel enterprise, but rather, a very "incarnational" and empirical methodology.

Through a series of analogies, he demonstrated that Rome indeed was orthodox in every instance. His was not an argument in a circle, but rather, a conclusion based on many hard facts of history. Newman is looking back at Church history and trying to discern a pattern or a design with regard to the history of doctrine and theology, rather than trying to construct an arbitrary theory and forcing the facts to fit into it.

Newman's reasoning is analogical, not Thomistic (which is primarily syllogistic). Whatever category that fits into (presumably Platonic in some broad sense), it is a different mode of thinking than Thomists or post-Enlightenment modern men are used to. Newman's mode of thinking was highly influenced by Bishop Joseph Butler's classic Christian apologetic *Analogy of Religion* (1736), which the skeptical philosopher David Hume regarded as the best defense of Christianity that he had ever read.

Cardinal Newman was clearly profoundly influenced by this line of thought, particularly in his philosophical treatise *Grammar of Assent*, but also most assuredly in his notions of development of doctrine. He believes he has discerned the laws governing true developments, by virtue of various analogies to natural law (what might be called the "sacramentalism of nature") and other entities.

The following is a nutshell version of Newman's theory, from his own words:

Granting that some large variations of teaching in its long course of 1800 years exist, nevertheless, these, on examination, will be found … to proceed on a law, and with a harmony and a definite drift, and with an analogy to Scripture revelations, which … constitute an argument in their favour, as witnessing to a superintending Providence and a great Design.

(Newman, John Henry, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* [1845; revised 1878], edition published by Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1989, vii-viii. Preface to the Edition of 1878)

It becomes necessary … to assign certain characteristics of faithful developments … the presence of which serves as a test to discriminate between them and corruptions … I venture to set down Seven Notes … as follows:—There is no corruption if it retains one and the same type, the same principles, the same organization; if its beginnings anticipate its subsequent phases, and its later phenomena protect and subserve its earlier; if it has a power of assimilation and revival, and a vigorous action from first to last.

(*Ibid*., 170–171. Part 2, chapter 5, nos. 2, 4)

Principle is a better test of heresy than doctrine. Heretics are true to their principles, but change to and fro, backwards and forwards, in opinion; for very opposite doctrines may be exemplifications of the same principle … Thus Calvinists become Unitarians from the principle of private judgment. The doctrines of heresy are accidents and soon run to an end; its principles are everlasting … Protestantism, viewed in its more Catholic aspect, is doctrine without active principle; viewed in its heretical, it is active principle without doctrine.

(*Ibid*., 181–182. Part 2, ch. 5, section 2, no. 3)

A corruption is a development in that very stage in which it ceases to illustrate, and begins to disturb, the acquisitions gained in its previous history … A true development … is an addition which illustrates … the body of thought from which it proceeds … it is of a tendency conservative of what has gone before it.

(*Ibid.*, 199–200,203. Part 2, ch. 5, sec. 6, nos. 1, 5)

> Dissolution is that further state to which corruption tends. Corruption cannot, therefore, be of long standing; and thus duration is another test of a faithful development … A corruption … is distinguished … by its transitory character.
>
> (*Ibid.*, 203,205. Part 2, ch. 5, sec. 7, nos. 1, 3)

Protestants will argue that they can demonstrate an organic development of their own views from Christianity. But they have to demonstrate whether they are defining *development* and *corruption* according to Newman's definitions of same, or by some other criteria. If the latter, then they need to show how and why Newman's criteria are faulty, and proceed to create definitions of their own, which in turn will have to be backed up with abundant historical verification (precisely the strength of Newman's theory) in order to hold up under scrutiny.

For a Protestant to do so, they must deal with various doctrines, and show how the distinctively non-Catholic doctrines can be defended, using whatever criteria of legitimacy is preferred: Newman's or some alternative framework. In other words, the Protestant task vis-à-vis development of doctrine would be exactly the opposite of Newman's: to show how and why *non-Catholic* distinctive doctrines are consistent with the criteria, and how and why Catholic distinctive doctrines are *not*.

Insofar as Newman's theory of development was rejected in his lifetime, then that was certainly because it was misunderstood, as the history of this idea goes back explicitly at least to the fifth century, and St. Vincent of Lerins. There is nothing whatever in his thesis contrary to the historic and traditional Catholic faith (obscurantist "traditionalist" and anti-Catholic critiques notwithstanding).

Newman was often misunderstood, because of his sheer brilliance of intellect and vision. This is also nothing new. We would expect that: the greatest geniuses are always "ahead of their time." But in this instance, he was merely expounding in a strikingly original and eloquent way what had already been taught in the patristic period.

The "bum rap" against Newman largely subsided after he was named a Cardinal in 1879 by Pope Leo XIII. Theological liberals, however, have

been claiming him as their own for many years, and perhaps this accounts for at least some of the confusion as to the "orthodoxy" of development. But the modernist arguments are silly, illogical, and insubstantial. They simply assume that any thinker of the extraordinary rank of Newman would have to be a modernist dissenter, without troubling themselves to understand the man's work and thought, which was thoroughly orthodox and traditional. In any event, by the time of Vatican II, if not long before, Venerable John Henry Cardinal Newman was completely vindicated in all quarters of the Church. He foresaw the thinking of Vatican II to a greater degree than any other 19th century (or even early 20th century) Catholic figure.

Newman doesn't regard his stated "laws" of development as irrevocable happenings, as in biological natural selection. That is a misconception. Rather, he is making conclusions or observing historical laws/generalizations based on actual history, and locating various tendencies with regard to Catholic vs. heretical development (i.e., corruption).

To use one of his historical examples: Calvinism did not develop from Catholicism, because it changed the underlying principles; thus became something largely (though not totally) different. The formal principle (*sola Scriptura*) was different, and thus the ecclesiology, etc. This process of schism didn't follow Newman's seven notes of legitimate development, so is not a development by his own criteria (whether one agrees or disagrees with them).

What Newman argued was that the basic, underlying "heretical" formal principles (private judgment, *sola Scriptura*, rejection of apostolic succession, etc.) are the same in both Calvinism and Unitarianism, so that this could possibly explain the "evolution" (not development) of Unitarianism from Calvinism. Both are corruptions of apostolic Christianity (though to greatly varying degrees), but they are similar in terms of interior presuppositions and principles of formal authority. Their ultimate underlying principles were the same: private judgment, *sola Scriptura*, and no authoritative, binding church to preclude such eventualities.

Newman would not contend that Unitarianism is consistent *theologically* with Calvinism (nor would I). His analysis in the *Essay on*

Development is primarily on the level of presuppositions; particularly as applied to history—"tested" by the facts of history's progression, so to speak. We can readily observe that the heresies and factions and schisms have proliferated and either died out or mutated into something else, whereas the Catholic Church is what she always was; merely more highly developed.

Cardinal Newman's style (with its gigantic sentences, extreme complexity, and heavy use of analogy and copious example) likely prevents many from understanding him. That is not necessarily indicative of a lack of intelligence on anyone's part (style being highly subjective). Newman is to many what someone like Shakespeare is to many: abominably, excessively verbose.

He was a profound thinker, of the very highest order, which more than accounts for his extreme complexities (beyond his "high-falutin' " style, which is not to everyone's taste). He was also a very sensitive man, of melancholy temperament, as is well known. When one is much more deeply hurt by the rudeness or misunderstandings of others than the next person, that would account, I think, for a seeming exuberance of self-defense (which is then taken to be self-centeredness or arrogance). He was both a brilliant intellectual genius and an extremely sensitive and fragile man. That combination is a very difficult one to live with, and the "cross" of such persons is to be vastly misunderstood.

Newman is often criticized for over-generalizing about his theological opponents. But one must always remember that he was often dealing particular mindset of mid-19th century English anti-Catholicism. His works dealing specifically with that subject (for example, *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England*, 1851) are a sort of "sociological" generalization. One is allowed to make broad observations with regard to prejudicial anti-Catholicism, just as with any other topic. But of course, Newman (like all of us) will sometimes exaggerate or be a bit too unkind or unfair in the midst of vigorous controversial topics. The flavor of the (in my opinion, astonishingly insightful) above-cited book is evident in some comments in its first page:

> I am going to inquire why it is, that, in this intelligent nation, and in this rational 19th century, we Catholics are so despised and hated by our

> own countrymen, with whom we have lived all our lives, that they are prompt to believe any story, however extravagant, that is told to our disadvantage; as if beyond doubt we were, every one of us, either brutishly deluded or preternaturally hypocritical, and they themselves, on the contrary were in comparison of us absolute specimens of sagacity, wisdom, uprightness, manly virtue, and enlightened Christianity. I am not inquiring why they are not Catholics themselves, but why they are so angry with those who are. Protestants differ amongst themselves, without calling each other fools and knaves …

Newman maintained many Protestant friendships after his conversion, and wound up being highly respected in (very non-Catholic) England, after the appearance of his autobiographical *Apologia pro vita sua* in 1864. He would have sharply distinguished between critique (especially of anti-Catholicism) and the respect of common ground and fellowship. He was both ecumenist and apologist.

Chapter Six

6. The Development of Catholic Mariology

It has been claimed by critics of Catholicism that development of various Catholic doctrines is excessive and of a different qualitative order than, say, early Christological development. But by what objective criterion or measuring-rod does one differentiate between a legitimate development and one that is, in fact, no development at all, but rather, a corruption? Why is the Immaculate Conception of Mary believed to be a corruption; on what grounds? Mere emotions and completely subjective judgments that such doctrines are "excessive" are not sufficient. Specificity is a prerequisite in this discussion, by its very nature (along with a working knowledge of doctrinal history).

Can non-Catholics demonstrate that the Immaculate Conception departs in essence from the very early concept of the New Eve (Newman argues to the contrary)? Or, for example, how the concept of Mary as Mediatrix is *a priori* unthinkable (as many casually assume)? Or can it be shown how these developments differ in essence from ones that virtually all Christians accept, such as the Christological definitions and the canon of Scripture?

The very notion of development is an assumption that the same doctrines can be understood in greater depth by means of philosophy, reflection, battles with heretics, prayer, new social and ethical problems, the accumulated wisdom of the faithful, the Church, and experience, etc. Therefore, it is not at all inconsistent (or, surprising) for a later philosophy to be introduced in order to explain an apostolic doctrine. One is the servant of the other; they are not the same thing. No single philosophy rules in Christianity.

We must all accept reason and logic as essential components of faith (in the sense of beliefs and creeds). That reason can utilize various

philosophies in order to elaborate upon Christian belief, because the philosophies and the beliefs are two different things. That is why it is no contradiction to say that a doctrine remains apostolic, while it is being "filtered", so to speak, through a new means of philosophical or epistemological understanding (such as Aristotelianism or Scholasticism). It is precisely in defending the faith that doctrines are often developed to a higher degree. Nowhere is this more evident than with regard to the Christological and trinitarian controversies.

The belief in Mary's sinlessness (the essence of the Immaculate Conception) was not universal in the early Church, but that is not strictly necessary for a belief to be apostolic. Some people will get it wrong, which shouldn't surprise anyone, and it is evident in the history of the canon (which Protestants have no problem accepting, save for seven books). Obviously, the Immaculate Conception was not universally believed, as it is a development—it doesn't *have* to be universally present (i.e., in its fully-developed form) early on. What is constant is the *kernel* or *essential core belief* of the later-proclaimed dogma. The Immaculate Conception flows from the sinlessness of Mary. It merely extends it back to conception, and in victorious (entirely God-granted) opposition to original sin.

St. Thomas Aquinas defined the Immaculate Conception differently than the later definition defines it. He thought that it had to do with Mary's *mother,* whereas the dogmatic view is that it was strictly a miraculous intervention by God, referring to *Mary alone,* and no one else. St. Thomas, held that Mary was actually sinless. Even Martin Luther believed in the Immaculate Conception.

Eve was immaculate before the Fall. So was the Blessed Virgin Mary (after the Fall). We *all* would have been immaculate, but for the Fall. Why, then, is it considered controversial to even suppose for the sake of argument that God would grant this privilege to the *Theotokos,* the Mother of God?

The Bible could have easily listed its own books, but it never did. God saw fit to allow the Church to figure that out. For that matter, the Trinity is never explained explicitly in any one place. It is a deduction from many, many verses, which—in order to be consistently applied—must be interpreted in a trinitarian way. The Immaculate Conception is far less

evident in Scripture, of course, but there is still a surprising amount of material that can be brought to bear.

St. Irenæus seems to hold that Mary committed some actual sin. It is not, however, impossible (or even that unusual) for a Church Father to have a correct insight mixed in with a false one; for example, Augustine's theories on predestination, which went too far; Jerome's early opinions on the deuterocanonical books, which were incorrect, or Ambrose's false notion of a ransom paid to the devil by Christ, or Origen's eschatological errors. History is not so "neat and clean" that exceptions cannot be found to the rule. We are dealing with fallen human beings.

The patristic consensus, however, was that Mary was actually sinless. This was strongly implied by the New Eve motif, which goes back as far as St. Justin Martyr and St. Irenaeus, in the 2nd century. Other Fathers who believed Mary was sinless included Hippolytus, Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianz, Gregory Nyssa, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, Augustine, Ephraim of Syria, and Cyril of Alexandria. The exceptions are few: Tertullian (later a Montanist heretic), Origen, Basil the Great, and John Chrysostom thought Mary committed actual sin.

But Catholic teaching does not require literal unanimity of the Fathers; only significant agreement. Individual Fathers are not infallible. The Church Councils make the judgment as to orthodox doctrine. Catholics believe that even St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas got a few things wrong (just as Protestants believe that Calvin and Luther were not infallible).

So the first kernel of the Immaculate Conception in apostolic Tradition was the New Eve motif, then there was a growing sense in the Church that Mary was sinless, then the application of that sinlessness back to Mary's conception, in order to "overcome" the problem of original sin (synthesized in its final form by Duns Scotus in the 13th century, almost 600 years before the definition).

Eve was immaculate until she was tempted by Satan, and fell. The second Eve, Mary, was offered—in the Annunciation—the chance to say "yes" to God, and in so doing, to "undo" Eve's "no" and disobedience. Now —following Justin's analogy—it is reasonable to assume that Mary was

sinless, since Eve was originally, and if Mary's actions are believed to have "undone" Eve's, to a cosmic degree.

If Mary was a sinner, she couldn't have done that, as she would have already been subject to the fruits of Eve's disobedience. That is the whole point of the New Eve motif, and the Immaculate Conception is merely a logical extension of Mary's actual sinlessness.

The closest analogy to true development of doctrine is organic development of living things. The single cell of the fertilized egg is the very same human being that develops and lives to 70-odd years. It does not look much like a human being at that point, but it already possesses every attribute that it needs to develop and grow into a newborn baby, an infant, a 9-year-old child, a teenager, and an adult human being. Catholics and most other Christians believe that fertilized egg is in possession of an eternal soul from the beginning. Fully-developed doctrines, therefore, can look very unlike their early kernels, yet remain the same in essence, just as the 70-year-old man is the same person who was once a tiny, tiny fertilized egg.

Certain doctrines (e.g., Real Presence and baptismal regeneration) achieved more wide and thorough and early consensus than others (e.g., the canon of Scripture and various Marian doctrines and original sin). That doesn't mean that development does not apply to the latter. All it means is that the Church was granted (early on) a more complete understanding of the former doctrines, and that the process took longer for the latter doctrines.

The Immaculate Conception is, in any event, rooted in Scripture itself (specifically Luke 1:28: literally, "full of grace"—*kecharitomene* in Greek), much more so than *sola Scriptura* and the canon of Scripture, which are not to be found in the Bible at all. If explicit biblical proof is necessary for any doctrine to be accepted in Christianity, then Protestants should immediately deny the canon of Scripture and *sola Scriptura*, on grounds that they are not biblical, and can't be traced back to the earliest apostles.

The Holy Trinity can be defended from Scripture alone (and I do so myself, vigorously), but the fact remains that development took place. It is not qualitatively different to go from a somewhat vague concept of the Trinity to the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, the Two Natures, and the

extreme subtleties of the *filioque* debate, than it is to go from the New Eve to the sinless Mary, to the immaculately conceived Mary.

Each development acts upon what came before it. Complexity of explication and understanding increases, yet the essence of the belief remains the same from beginning to end (a Triune God, and a sinless Mary). Granted, the Marian development took longer, but time is not of the essence of development.

The Catholic view is arguably derived straight from the Greek meaning of *kecharitomene*. It is derived from the root *charis*, whose literal meaning is *grace* (it is translated as *grace* 129 out of 150 times in the King James Version of the Bible). The angel is here, in effect, giving Mary a new name (*full of grace*), as if he were addressing Abraham as *full of faith*, or Solomon *full of wisdom* (characteristics which typified them). Throughout the Bible, names were indicative of one's character and essence, all the more so if God renamed a person.

Charis (*grace*) often means *favor*, but it can also refer to a state. The latter is how Catholics usually think of grace: or more specifically, as a power or ability which God grants in order to overcome sin (and this is how we interpret Luke 1:28). This sense is a biblical one, as well, as seen in the above citation, and in the following, from Protestant Greek scholar W.E. Vine:

> … in another objective sense, the effect of grace, the spiritual state of those who have experienced its exercise, whether (1) a state of grace, e.g., Rom. 5:2; 1 Pet. 5:12; 2 Pet. 3:18, or (2) a proof thereof in practical effects, deeds of grace, e.g., 1 Cor. 16:3 …; 2 Cor. 8:6, 19 … the power and equipment for ministry, e.g., Rom. 1:5; 12:6; 15:15; 1 Cor. 3:10; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:2, 7 …
>
> (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1940, vol. 2, 170, "Grace" / "Charis")

Greek scholar Marvin Vincent (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887) notes that even Wycliffe and Tyndale (no fanatical supporters of the Catholic Church, they) both rendered *kecharitomene* in Luke 1:28 as "full of grace," in their Bible translations. The Revised Version of the KJV (1885) had "endued with

grace" in the margin, and this is the literal translation of *kecharitomene*, according to Vincent (vol. 1, 259).

So it appears that many Bible versions are not applying the principle of literal translation when it comes to Luke 1:28 A.T. Robertson concurs with Vincent, in holding that *kecharitomene* means "endowed with grace" or "enriched with grace" (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930, vol. 2, 13). Likewise, W.E. Vine, who defines it as "to endue with Divine favour or grace" (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, vol. 2, 171).

These are all Protestant reference works, and cannot, therefore, be accused of Catholic bias in translation or definition. The bias (if there is any here) would seem, however, to be evident in some Protestant commentaries (on Lk 1:28), for example:

> The mistake of the Vulgate's rendering, 'full of grace,' has been taken abundant advantage of by the Romish Church ... let them listen to the Lord's own words. 'Nay, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.' (See on ch. 11:27).
>
> (*Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1864, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown)

This is what happens when utilizes Bible commentary (or translation, for that matter) as a polemical tool to promulgate one's own prior theological predispositions (eisegesis), rather than letting the Bible speak for itself, and following it wherever it leads (exegesis).

For St. Paul, grace (*charis*) is the antithesis and overcomer of sin (RSV):

> Romans 5:20–21 Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where **sin** increased, **grace** abounded all the more, so that, as **sin** reigned in death, **grace** also might reign through **righteousness** to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
>
> Romans 6:14 For **sin** will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under **grace**.
>
> Romans 5:17 If, because of one man's **trespass**, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of **grace** and the free gift of **righteousness** reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 1:9 who **saved** us and called us with a **holy calling**, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the **grace** which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago,

2 Corinthians 1:12 For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience that we have behaved in the world, and still more toward you, with **holiness** and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the **grace** of God.

2 Corinthians 12:9 but he said to me, "My **grace** is sufficient for you, for my power is made **perfect** in weakness." I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the **power of Christ** may rest upon me.

We are saved, of course, by grace, and grace alone:

Acts 15:11 But we believe that we shall be **saved through the grace** of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.

Ephesians 2:5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (**by grace you have been saved**),

Ephesians 2:8–10 **For by grace you have been saved** through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Titus 2:11 For the **grace** of God has appeared for the **salvation** of all men,

1 Peter 1:10 The prophets who prophesied of the **grace** that was to be yours searched and inquired about this **salvation**;

Romans 3:24 they are **justified by his grace** as a gift, through the **redemption** which is in Christ Jesus,

Romans 11:5 So too at the present time there is a **remnant, chosen by grace**.

Titus 3:7 so that we might be **justified by his grace** and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

The implications of all this for Luke 1:28 and the Immaculate Conception of Mary ought to be obvious by now. All of the above instances of *grace* in English are translations of the Greek *charis*, the root of the word used by an angel in Luke 1:28 to describe Mary: *kecharitomene*. From the above we learn two things, and they are biblically certain:

1. Grace **saves** us.

2. Grace gives us the power to be **holy** and **righteous** and **without sin**.

Therefore, for a person to be *full of grace* is to both be saved and to be exceptionally, completely holy. Thus we might re-apply the above two propositions as follows:

1. To be **full** of the grace that saves is to **surely** be saved.

2. To be **full** of the grace which gives us the power to be **holy and righteous** and **without sin**, is to be **fully without sin**, by that same grace.

Or, we could make the following deductive argument, with premises (#1 and #2) derived directly from Scripture:

1. The Bible teaches that we are saved by God's grace.

2. The Bible teaches that we need God's grace to live a holy life, above sin.

3. To be "full of" God's grace, then, is to be saved.

4. Therefore, Mary is saved.

5. To be "full of" God's grace is also to be so holy that one is sinless.

6. Therefore, Mary is holy and sinless.

7. The essence of the Immaculate Conception is sinlessness.

8. Therefore, the Immaculate Conception, in its essence, is directly deduced from the strong evidence of many biblical passages, which teach the doctrines of #1 and #2.

The logic would seem to follow inexorably, from unquestionable biblical principles. The only way out of it would be to deny one of the two premises,

and hold that either (1) grace doesn't save, or that (2) grace isn't that power which enables one to be sinless and holy. In this fashion, the entire *essence* of the Immaculate Conception is proven (alone) from biblical principles and doctrines held by every orthodox Protestant.

The only possible quibble might be about *when* God applied this grace to Mary. We know she had it as a young woman, at the Annunciation. Catholics believe that God gave her the grace at her conception so as to avoid the original sin which she inevitably *would* have inherited, being human, *but* for God's preventive grace, which saved her from falling into the pit of sin by avoidance rather than rescue, after she had fallen in. In a very simple sense, the Immaculate Conception is God giving Mary the grace to be as sinless and innocent as Eve originally was, a thing quite fitting and not at all strange or implausible for one chosen to bear the Lord God in her own body.

All of this follows straightforwardly from Luke 1:28 and the (primarily Pauline) exegesis of *charis* elsewhere in the New Testament. It would be strange for a Protestant to underplay grace, when they are known for their constant emphasis on *grace alone* for salvation (with which we Catholics fully agree—we merely deny the tenet of *faith alone*, as contrary to the clear teaching James, and Paul, when closely scrutinized). If grace saves, then to be full of it is to be not only saved, but without sin, according to biblical principles and Protestant beliefs concerning sanctification. For no one can have more grace than to be "full" of it. It's as simple as that.

Protestants keep objecting that these Catholic beliefs are "speculative" (an insinuation that they go far *beyond* the biblical evidence) but once one goes deeply enough into Scripture and the meanings of the words of Scripture, it is not all that speculative at all. Rather, it looks much more like Protestant theology has selectively ignored grace when it applies to the Blessed Virgin Mary, but trumpeted it when it applies to all the rest of us Christian believers.

It is one more instance of ignoring some parts of Scripture, and pure bias against Catholic distinctives, causing a corresponding bias and unacceptable subjectivity in hermeneutics and exegesis. Thus, it is not so much a matter of Catholics *reading into* Scripture, as it is Protestants in effect reading certain passages *out of* Scripture altogether, because they don't fit in with their preconceived notions.

To reiterate: grace is presented as the *antithesis* of sin in Holy Scripture. In other words, it is a zero-sum game: the more grace one has, the less sin they have, because the two are mutually exclusive: like oil and water. Or, one might look at grace as water, and sin as the air in an empty glass (us). When you pour in the water (grace), the sin (air) is displaced. A full glass of water, therefore, contains no air.

My argument was that grace in Scripture seems to be portrayed in this fashion, vis-a-vis sin (see also, e.g., similar zero-sum game concepts in 1 John 1:7, 9; 3:6, 9; 5:18). This may not be an absolutely airtight biblical argument, but it seems pretty strong, at face value. Certainly all mainstream Christians agree that grace is required both for salvation and to overcome sin. So in a sense my argument is only one of degree, deduced (almost in common sense, I would say) from notions that Christians already hold in common.

Mary is the only person in Scripture who is defined (called, in the sense of a descriptive title) as "Full of Grace" (*kecharitomene*). This must be significant. That description makes her unique in some sense (I contend that the uniqueness is sinlessness, as well as—obviously—being the *Theotokos*).

It is true that God is everywhere, and every Christian has the Holy Spirit inside of Him. The uniqueness of the Incarnation, on the other hand, was that only one person was chosen (with her willing consent) to be *Theotokos* and have the incarnate God: God made flesh, inside of her body for nine months. Though the Immaculate Conception was not, strictly speaking, necessary for the Incarnation, yet it was fitting and entirely appropriate.

The Catholic "case" from Luke 1:28 is not, technically, that Mary's name was *changed*; just that she was called this name *by an angel* (in the sense of a title, or additional identifier), and that that act could not possibly be without significance, in the Hebraic (and biblical) worldview. Consider this analogy: Jesus was only referred to once in the Bible as *Prince of Peace* (Isaiah 9:6). The title isn't even used in the New Testament. Yet in Isaiah 9:6, the text (RSV) says that "he shall be called … Prince of Peace" (and three other titles which weren't used all that often referring to Jesus, if at all—two seem to apply more directly to the Father and the Spirit).

The same holds true for *Emmanuel* (Matthew 1:23), derived from Isaiah 7:14 and 8:8. Is 7:14 states "… shall call his name Immanuel." Mt 1:23 quotes this passage: "… 'his name shall be called Emmanuel' (which means, God with us)." Yet the title (name?) appears nowhere else in the New Testament, not even in the other Gospels. It doesn't *have* to. Once is more than enough, in biblical thought.

In other words, all names in Scripture have a high symbolic and descriptive significance, usually indicative of a person's character, nature, or leading personality trait (one need only look up "Names" in any Bible Dictionary). A person's name doesn't have to be *changed*—in terms of *exclusive* use of a different name thereafter (or the specific title used often) for this to apply.

Thus, the fact that Mary is called *Full of Grace* just one time does not lessen the significance of this address at all (particularly since it came from the angel Gabriel). But the fact that this title was applied to her, uniquely, as an individual, is supremely important, and altogether in line with the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception (though not an airtight "proof" in and of itself—Catholics deny *sola Scriptura* anyway, on other strong biblical grounds, so our view doesn't absolutely require such "proof texts").

The development of the Immaculate Conception was not different in kind from developments of any number of other Catholic (and generally-held Christian) doctrines. Transubstantiation is to Real Presence is what the Immaculate Conception is to the sinless Mary (or New Eve). Also, before 325, the theology of the Two Natures of Christ wasn't fully developed by any means, nor even the *Theotokos*. The Trinity was always believed, but—strictly speaking—the trinitarian and Christological developments are the Two Natures of Chalcedon in 451 and further explanations over against the Monophysites and Monothelites even after that time.

Cardinal Newman stated, proverbially: "No doctrine is defined until it is violated." Most Church Councils throughout history were called in order to fight heretical error, but there were internal reform councils as well, for example: Lateran I (1123), Lateran II (1139), Vienne (1312), and (most notably) Vatican II (1962–1965).

To use another Marian doctrine as an example, no one is saying that the doctrine of the Assumption is a clear-cut case on historiographical and logical and empirical grounds (I freely admit that it is one of the more difficult Catholic dogmas to substantiate, based on history alone). But that is not, in the final analysis, what dogmas are based on. Dogmas intersect with these things: they are not illogical and not opposed to history and empirical evidences. Yet it remains true that they are *articles of faith,* just as the theological notions which all Christians hold in common are articles of faith: a reasonable faith, but still faith. And such beliefs require grace from God in order to be accepted by sinful men.

One must accept the authority of the Church in order to give assent to many Catholic doctrines, just as many Protestants grant de facto infallibility to Calvin and Luther, who deigned to overturn 1450 years of continuous received Christian Tradition. Protestants shouldn't delude themselves into pretending that they don't have any traditions. All Christians have tradition of some sort—whether true, false, apostolic, man-made, etc.

Protestants are troubled by the "late" development and lack of early documentation of the Bodily Assumption of Mary. Catholics reply to that objection by asking when the canon of the New Testament as we know it today (27 books) was first mentioned. It was, in fact, first listed by St. Athanasius, in 367: more than 330 years after the death of Christ, or more than eight generations. Jesus left no written document, so the New Testament is comprised mostly of letters and eyewitness accounts. It had to be compiled and declared as authoritative by the Catholic Church.

The "late" development of the Assumption, on the other hand, is plausibly explained by virtue of the fact that it was a private, unheralded event (like, e.g., the Annunciation or the somewhat mysterious death of Moses). It was not intended to be public, for the very reason of Mary's humility and the primacy of Christ in early theological reflection by holy men and women of the Church.

It flows theologically and logically from the "seed" of the description of Mary as the New Eve, which was an early patristic theme. Mary bore God; was made perfect by God in order to do so; thus was not subject to the bodily effects of sin, and was immediately resurrected at the end of her

earthly life (as *all* of us would have been, *but* for the Fall). We see her as the Queen of Heaven in Revelation 12—the most straightforward, literal interpretation of 12:5 is Marian. The Assumption can be logically derived from the Immaculate Conception, just as the *filioque* (the Spirit proceeds from the Son and the Father) and the Two Natures of Christ flow from trinitarianism, upon further, elaborate reflection.

The Trinity was always believed, but the *trinitarian formulas* developed slowly from the first century onward. They weren't explicit like the later formulations were, or nearly as complex and philosophically subtle and nuanced. For that very reason, there were Christological heresies such as Arianism, Sabellianism, Nestorianism, and Monophysitism.

Indeed, the Trinity can be established from the Bible Alone. But it does, however, take a little work to deduce the Trinity in Scripture. If we put ten men on a desert island with Bibles, and somehow had the ability to wipe out all their previous theological views, I would venture to guess that none would arrive at the Trinity through Scripture alone, or if they did, it would be quite primitive, and/or would take a very long while to deduce (it would be nothing like, e.g., the Chalcedonian formulas from 451). Jehovah's Witnesses and the other heretics cannot see the biblical evidence for the Trinity because they have removed themselves from the common Tradition of all three major branches of Christianity and replaced that with their own man-made revivals of earlier heresies.

The Church developed more explicit definitions as it confronted blasphemous heresies. Likewise, we see the terms *New Eve* and *Mother of God* early on, and they strongly imply the later more explicit Marian doctrines. *Mother of God* is in Scripture, since Mary is called "mother of the Lord." *Lord* (*Kurios*) means *God* (*Theos*), when applied to Jesus, so it doesn't take a rocket scientist to deduce the concept straight from Scripture.

Mother of God (*Theotokos*) was defined as dogma in 431 at the Council of Ephesus precisely as an antidote against the Nestorian heresy (Nestorius denied that Mary was the Mother of God the Son as well as the human Christ—he "lobbied" for the term *Christotokos*). Marian development was a direct corollary of Christology. Mary was immaculate because she bore Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, God in the flesh. God was concerned about even inanimate objects that came in contact with His ark

of the covenant (one recalls the phrase "holy ground" when God spoke to Moses).

Since the Marian doctrines are clearly far less explicit in Scripture (they are mostly implicit and deductively-ascertained), it is to be fully expected that they would take longer to develop, just as, e.g., the canon of Scripture took much longer to reach its conclusion, because it is not in the Bible *at all,* and had to necessarily rely totally on Church authority and apostolic Tradition for its promulgation.

And because it can't be found anywhere in the Bible, *Bible Alone* could not possibly determine the canon or be the basis for it; nor can *sola Scriptura* in turn establish itself. It has to necessarily depend on an authoritative Church for its very existence, because it presupposes a canon, and that canon had to be authoritatively proclaimed by human beings, as it was not part of God's revelation.

Chapter Seven

7. The Development of the Papacy and the Canon of Scripture

Catholics believe all their doctrines are present in Scripture, just as Protestants do. We don't accept *sola Scriptura*. But we assert that all the doctrines we believe can be found in Scripture explicitly or implicitly, or directly deduced from doctrines in Scripture (the latter is true—many Protestant polemicists argue—even for the central Protestant pillar of *sola Scriptura*). Scripture is central for us just as it is for Protestants; but it is not isolated, or separated from, or pitted against Tradition and Church: which it often refers to itself. And the Bible must be authoritatively interpreted at some point.

The papacy is illustrative: in fact there is quite a lot of biblical evidence for it, suggesting that papal jurisdiction and supreme authority is a biblical teaching.

The commonly-expressed Protestant concept, whereby true developments are—in effect—the Protestant (i.e., supposedly always "biblical") doctrines, while the distinctly Catholic ones are corruptions, is both circular and inconsistently and illogically applied, for the Protestant has no reason for accepting development of certain doctrines while denying the (legitimate) historical development of others, other than to baldly assert, "it is because *we* accept these doctrines; and we accept them because they are *biblical*, whereas Catholic distinctives are *not* biblical, and are merely traditions of men!" The logical circularity and historical insufficiency of this approach will become all the more clear as we proceed in our analysis.

Catholics speak often of doctrinal development because it is an undeniable historical fact. If Protestants accept development of trinitarianism or the canon of the New Testament, then it is not improper

for us to accept development of the papacy, or the Marian doctrines. Protestants locate the difference of principle in alleged lack of biblical support (for exclusively Catholic doctrines) vs. abundance of biblical support (for distinctively Protestant doctrines. We assert that we have biblical (as well as patristic) support for our views. The Protestant disagrees.

But the criterion for the Protestant—when their view is closely scrutinized—reduces to obviously subjective Protestant doctrines (depending on denominational tradition), whereas for the Catholic it is historically demonstrable unbroken apostolic Tradition, developed over 2000 years. In any event the controversy cannot be settled by a disdain for the very concept of development, as if it were improper to utilize it at all in the discussion of historical theology.

We can trace all the doctrines through history. We can determine whether or not they were held as consensus or as increasingly consensus opinions throughout Church history—particularly with regard to the Church Fathers. We can compare and contrast them to Holy Scripture (being harmonious with and being explicitly contained in Scripture are not identical concepts, nor is the former antithetical to the latter). Divergent Protestant opinions, on the other hand, are thoroughly unverifiable upon close scrutiny. They are only as good as the individual or denomination holding to them.

Baptists, for example, believe in adult, believer's baptism. But Presbyterians believe in infant baptism. All appeal to *Scripture Alone* (as Tradition is rejected as any sort of ultimate norm or authority for doctrine). How does one choose? It inevitably comes down to the individual in the end.

The Catholic apostolic and historical view, on the other hand, takes seriously what the Holy Spirit has been saying through the centuries to believers en masse, and what He has taught the Church (what Catholics call the "mind of the Church"). In Catholicism, it is not the individual who reigns supreme, but the corporate Christianity and "accumulated wisdom" of the Church (itself grounded in Holy Scripture); Tradition passed down in its fullness through the centuries, as referred to by St. Paul in many places in his epistles.

With regard to development, the judgment of an individual Protestant as to what is overly "speculative" is itself ultimately "speculative" and "unverifiable," precisely as the Protestant accuses Catholic development. They rest—in the final analysis—upon the person making the claim, and other Protestant scholars and commentators, not on Scripture itself, because the Bible never specifically informs us of which beliefs are "overly speculative." Why should someone accept the word of a sole Protestant, where they contradict the Church Fathers, who were much closer in time to the apostles?

It is no coincidence or shock that the Protestant finds "overly-speculative" all the doctrines held by the Catholic Church that have been discarded by Protestantism! Again, this is circular reasoning, and obviously so. But let's accept this methodology for a moment, for the sake of argument, and apply it as a *reductio ad absurdum* to Protestantism:

1. True developments must be explicitly grounded in Scripture, or else they are arbitrary and "unbiblical" or "antibiblical"—therefore false.

2. The Trinity and the Resurrection of Christ and the Virgin Birth, e.g., are thoroughly grounded in Scripture, and are therefore proper (but Catholics also hold to these beliefs).

3. The canon of the New Testament is (undeniably) not itself a "biblical doctrine." The New Testament never gives a "text" for the authoritative listing of its books.

4. Therefore, the canon of the New Testament is not a legitimate development of doctrine (according to #1), and is, in fact, a corruption and a false teaching.

5. Therefore, in light of #4, the New Testament (i.e., in the 27-book form which has been passed down through the Catholic centuries to Luther and the Protestants as a received Tradition) cannot be used as a measuring-rod to judge the orthodoxy of other doctrines.

6. #5 being the case, the "explicit Scripture only" criterion for legitimate developments is radically self-defeating, and must be discarded (along with *sola Scriptura* itself).

This argument renders null and void the usual evangelical Protestant criticism concerning development of doctrine. Protestants will not give up both *sola Scriptura* and the New Testament in order to maintain a fallacious opinion (given the above conclusions) of what constitutes a true development. The only conceivable escape from the logical horns of the dilemma would be to allow a tacit and altogether arbitrary exception for the canon of the New Testament, but then, of course, the Catholic immediately asks in reply,

> On what basis can you absolutely bow to (Catholic) Church authority in that one instance, while you deny its binding nature in all others, and fall back to *Scripture Alone*, the very canon of which was proclaimed authoritatively by the Catholic Church?

Scripture does not teach *sola Scriptura* but it does teach an authoritative Tradition and Church. Therefore, even the premise on which the usual Protestant criterion for true vs. false developments rests (*sola Scriptura*), is itself self-defeating. Christian Tradition simply cannot be dismissed, for to do so is to discard the Bible itself, and with it, the entire Protestant epistemological foundation and formal principle. It is only possible to have Bible + Church + Apostolic Tradition, or to have none of the three. No other position can be rationally taken, whether the question is approached historically or biblically. It is a matter of inescapable logic.

If the Catholic can show that there is plenty of biblical evidence for the papacy (as I have done, I think, in my book, *A Biblical Defense of Catholicism*, pages 218–238), then the papacy is on at least the same epistemological ground as something like, say, congregationalism or a symbolic Eucharist and baptism, which arguably rest on quite flimsy biblical grounds. Protestants give their biblical arguments for doctrines; Catholics give theirs. Who is to say who is right? On what basis?

We answer (just as the Fathers did) that this is determined by tracing back doctrines historically: what has the Church taught in the past? Can this particular doctrine x be traced back to the apostles, even if only in kernel or primitive form? I submit that the Protestant distinctives cannot be so traced. The Catholic distinctives certainly can, once development is rightly understood and consistently applied.

The Church at Rome was preeminent from the beginning, and its bishops, the popes, exercised the primacy, albeit with much more confidence and self-understanding as time went on. This is not unusual, and the development of creeds, trinitarianism, and the canon of Scripture likewise rapidly developed in the 4th century, after persecution had ceased. Likewise, this applied to the papacy, and Mariology. It was clearly primarily a cultural/historical phenomenon, rather than a "biblical" one. I will again cite Cardinal Newman, concerning the early papacy:

> A partial fulfilment, or at least indications of what was to be, there certainly were in the first age. Faint one by one, at least they are various, and are found in writers of many times and countries, and thereby illustrative of each other, and forming a body of proof. Thus St. Clement, in the name of the Church of Rome, writes to the Corinthians, when they were without a bishop; St. Ignatius of Antioch addresses the Roman Church, out of the Churches to which he writes, as "the Church, which has in dignity the first seat, of the city of the Romans," and implies that it was too high for his directing as being the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul.
>
> St. Polycarp of Smyrna has recourse to the Bishop of Rome on the question of Easter; the heretic Marcion, excommunicated in Pontus, betakes himself to Rome; Soter, Bishop of Rome, sends alms, according to the custom of his Church, to the Churches throughout the empire, and, in the words of Eusebius, "affectionately exhorted those who came to Rome, as a father his children;" the Montanists from Phrygia come to Rome to gain the countenance of its Bishop; Praxeas, from Asia, attempts the like, and for a while is successful; St. Victor, Bishop of Rome, threatens to excommunicate the Asian Churches; St. Irenaeus speaks of Rome as "the greatest Church, the most ancient, the most conspicuous, and founded and established by Peter and Paul," appeals to its tradition, not in contrast indeed, but in preference to that of other Churches, and declares that "to this Church, every Church, that is, the faithful from every side must resort" or "must agree with it, propter potiorem principalitatem."

> "O Church, happy in its position," says Tertullian, "into which the Apostles poured out, together with their blood, their whole doctrine;" and elsewhere, though in indignation and bitter mockery, he calls the Pope "the Pontifex Maximus, the Bishop of {158} Bishops." The presbyters of St. Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, complain of his doctrine to St. Dionysius of Rome; the latter expostulates with him, and he explains.
>
> The Emperor Aurelian leaves "to the Bishops of Italy and of Rome" the decision, whether or not Paul of Samosata shall be dispossessed of the see-house at Antioch; St. Cyprian speaks of Rome as "the See of Peter and the principal Church, whence the unity of the priesthood took its rise, whose faith has been commended by the Apostles, to whom faithlessness can have no access;" St. Stephen refuses to receive St. Cyprian's deputation, and separates himself from various Churches of the East; Fortunatus and Felix, deposed by St. Cyprian, have recourse to Rome; Basilides, deposed in Spain, betakes himself to Rome, and gains the ear of St. Stephen.
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> (*An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine,* 1878 ed., Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1989, 157–158; Part 1, Chapter 4, Section 3)

Here is a summary of some of the most notable instances of papal authority, up through the 6th century. Everyone in the early Church knew how doctrinal controversies could be definitively resolved:

> Even as early as the 2nd century we observe the strong authority of Pope Victor (r. 189–98) with regard to the Quartodecimen controversy (over the dating of Easter). St. Clement of Rome exercised much authority in the late 1st century. In the 3rd c., Pope St. Stephen reverses the decision of St. Cyprian of Carthage and a council of African bishops regarding a question of baptism. St. Cyprian had appealed both to Popes Cornelius and Stephen to resolve this issue. Shortly thereafter, many appeals were made to popes for various reasons, which would lead one to believe that the pope had some special authority: at least primacy, if not supremacy:

1. St. Athanasius (4th c.) appeals to Pope Julius I, from an unjust decision rendered against him by Oriental Bishops, and the pope reverses the sentence.

2. St. Basil the Great (4th c.), Archbishop of Caesarea pleads for the protection of Pope Damasus.

3. St. John Chysostom, in the early 5th c., appeals to Pope Innocent I, for a redress of grievances inflicted upon him by several Eastern Prelates, and by Empress Eudoxia of Constantinople.

4. St. Cyril (5th c.) appeals to Pope Celestine against Nestorius; Nestorius also does so, but the Pope favors Cyril.

5. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, is condemned by the Robber-Council of 449, and appealed to Pope Leo the Great, who declared the deposition invalid; Theodoret was restored to his See.

6. John, Abbot of Constantinople (6th c.) appeals from the decision of the Patriarch of that city to Pope St. Gregory the Great, who reverses the sentence.

This is a great deal of "authority." All these people were from the East—many of the most revered figures. They knew where the authority resided and they knew how to settle conflicts authoritatively in favor of orthodoxy.

I shall now delve deeply into Scripture itself, with regard to the papacy, for historical testimony—no matter how voluminous or widespread—is never sufficient for the Protestant who has a built-in hostility against the papacy, episcopacy, the Catholic Church; indeed, oftentimes against the notion of any binding spiritual and ecclesiastical authority whatsoever.

Holy Scripture gives us the common ground and the jointly acknowledged authority that both parties wholeheartedly accept. It is the divinely inspired Revelation and Word of God. Therefore, if we can show that in this Revelation the papacy is clearly ordained by Jesus (not simply a result of historical happenstance or pure chance), then we shall have gone a long way towards accomplishing our purpose.

At this point, I will produce commentary on the notion of Peter as the Rock, upon whom our Lord Jesus built His Church. This is—it seems to me—quite an extraordinary indication that Peter and his successors were

to possess sublime authority over the Church Universal. Words (especially from Jesus) *mean* something. They are not simply idle phrases of no particular import. This was a crucial and profound episode in the life of the disciples. Catholics believe that Matthew 16 describes the institutional beginning of the Christian (Catholic) Church.

In order to ascertain the precise meaning and ecclesiological application of these phrases we must take into account the culture of the time, cross-referencing of Holy Scripture (exegesis), principles of interpretation (hermeneutics), and the original languages. These methods are completely acceptable to Protestants. Therefore, if the results of such a study point clearly to Petrine primacy and a papacy, the honest student of the Bible must decide what he is to do with that information, and only so many choices exist.

Contra-Catholic polemicists make great play of the fact that the "papal" interpretation of Matthew 16 was supposedly not very widely held. But this is not the case. There were exceptions (as there always are), but there was also great consensus (just as, e.g., was true with regard to the New Testament canon). The following Fathers (and an Ecumenical Council) held that it was *Peter*, not his *faith* or *confession*, who was the Rock:

Tertullian
Hippolytus
Origen
Cyprian
Firmilian
Aphraates the Persian
Ephraim the Syrian
Hilary of Poitiers
Zeno of Africa
Gregory of Nazianzen
Gregory of Nyssa
Basil the Great
Didymus the Blind
Epiphanius
Ambrose
John Chrysostom

Jerome
Augustine
Cyril of Alexandria
Peter Chrysologus
Proclus of Constantinople
Secundinus (disciple and assistant of St. Patrick)
Theodoret
Council of Chalcedon

(all of the above are prior to 451 A.D.)

Maximus the Confessor (650 A.D.)
John Damascene (d.c. 749 A.D.)
Theodore the Studite (d. 826 A.D.)

[For 65 pages of documentation of these facts, see *Jesus, Peter, and the Keys*, by Scott Butler, Norman Dahlgren, and David Hess, Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Pub. Co., 1996, pages 215–279]

It is, therefore, impossible to hold that the "papal interpretation" of Matthew 16 was absent and contradicted in the early Church. One might, I suppose, emphasize the fact that most of the solid sources are from the 3rd or 4th century on, but of course that brings the critic of the papacy right back to the insurmountable problem of the canon of the New Testament, and the similarly relatively late flowering of explicit trinitarianism and Christology and the doctrine of original sin as well. Furthermore, the Protestant distinctives of extrinsic justification and symbolic baptism and Eucharist are virtually unknown among the Fathers, and the same holds for *sola Scriptura*.

Martin Luther, in his *Commentary on the Psalms*, wrote: "The Bible is its own interpreter." Very well, then, I challenge non-Catholics to consider the following biblical evidences, as expounded by Protestant scholars. We shall examine some Protestant scholarly exegesis of Matthew 16:18 and 16:19:

> Matthew 16:18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. (RSV)

Catholics contend that the Rock is Peter himself, not his faith, or Jesus (although arguably his faith is assumed by Christ in naming Peter Rock in the first place). Many prominent Protestant scholars and exegetes have agreed that Peter is the Rock in Matthew 16:18, including Henry Alford (Anglican: *The New Testament for English Readers,* vol. 1, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983, 119), John Broadus (Reformed Baptist: *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew,* Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1886, 355–356), C. F. Keil, Gerhard Kittel (Lutheran: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* vol. VI, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968, 98–99), and Oscar Cullmann (Lutheran: *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr,* 2nd rev. ed., 1962).

More recently, highly respected evangelical commentators R.T. France (Anglican; in Morris, Leon, general editor, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,* Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press / Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1985, vol. 1: *Matthew,* 254, 256), and D.A. Carson (Baptist; in Gaebelein, Frank E., general editor, *Expositor's Bible Commentary,* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984, vol. 8: *Matthew, Mark, Luke,* 368), who both surprisingly assert that only Protestant overreaction to Catholic Petrine and papal claims have brought about the denial that Peter himself is the Rock. Many other Protestant scholars and works confirm the Catholic view that Peter is the Rock:

1. *New Bible Dictionary,* edited by J.D. Douglas, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1962, "Peter," 972.

2. *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 1985 edition, "Peter," Micropedia, 330–333. D. W. O'Connor, the author of the article, is himself Protestant and author of *Peter in Rome: The Literary, Liturgical & Archaeological Evidence* (1969).

3. *New Bible Commentary,* Guthrie, D. & J.A. Motyer, editors, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 3rd edition, 1970 (reprinted, 1987, as *The Eerdmans Bible Commentary*), 837.

4. William F. Albright (Methodist) and C.S. Mann, *Anchor Bible,* Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971, vol. 26, 195,197–198.

5. Robert McAfee Brown, in McCord, Peter J., editor, *A Pope For All Christians?,* New York: Paulist Press, 1976, Introduction, 7. This book is an

ecumenical project offering views on the papacy from many perspectives. Brown is a Presbyterian and very prominent ecumenist.

6. K. Stendahl, in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (2nd revised edition; London: Nelson, 1962), 787.

7. *Peter in the New Testament,* Raymond E. Brown., Karl P. Donfried and John Reumann, editors, Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House/NY: Paulist Press, 1973, 92–93. This is probably the most important ecumenical work on Peter, and is thus cited first in a long bibliography in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. It is a common statement by a panel of eleven Catholic and Lutheran scholars.

8. Greek scholar Marvin Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament,* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1946 (orig. 1887), 4 volumes, vol. 1, 91–92.

9. William Hendriksen (Reformed), *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew,* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1973, 647.

10. Gerhard Maier (Lutheran), *The IVP Bible Background Commentary,* Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993, 90.

11. Craig L. Blomberg (Baptist), *The New American Commentary*: Matthew, vol. 22, Nashville: Broadman, 1992, 251–252.

12. Albert Barnes (Presbyterian), *Notes on the New Testament,* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1973, 170.

13. Herman Ridderbos (Reformed), *Bible Student's Commentary: Matthew,* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987, 303.

14. David Hill (Presbyterian), *New Century Bible Commentary*: Matthew, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972, 61.

Orthodox scholars who believe the Rock in Matthew 16:18 is Peter himself, include:

1. John Meyendorff, in *The Primacy of Peter,* (he is editor), Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992, 67–90.

2. Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople (d. c. 895): "On Peter repose the foundations of the faith" (Epist. 99 and Niceph., PG CII, 909 A, in Meyendorff, 72).

3. St. Gregory Palamas (d. 1359), called Peter the "foundation of the Church" (*Triads*, II, I, 38, in Meyendorff, 74). Meyendorff states (pp. 74–75) that "all" Byzantine theologians, even after the split with Rome in 1054, spoke in like fashion about Peter.

4. Gennadios Scholarios (Patriarch of Constantinople, d.c. 1472): "Christ established the Church on Peter" (*On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*, I, in Meyendorff, 873).

The same thing can be shown as regards St. Peter as Possessor of the *keys of the kingdom*:

> Matthew 16:19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven …
>
> Isaiah 22:20–22 In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, … and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.
>
> Revelation 3:7 [Christ describing Himself]: … the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens.
>
> In my book, *A Biblical Defense of Catholicism* (p. 223), I wrote:
>
> The power of the "keys," in the Hebrew mind, had to do with administrative authority and ecclesiastical discipline, and, in a broad sense, might be thought to encompass the use of excommunication, penitential decrees, a barring from the sacraments and lesser censures, and legislative and executive functions. Like the name Rock, this privilege was bestowed only upon St. Peter and no other disciple or Apostle. He was to become God's "vice-regent," so to speak. In the Old Testament, a steward was a man over a house (Genesis 43:19, 44:4, 1 Kings 4:6, 16:9, 18:3, 2 Kings 10:5 15:5 18:18, Isaiah 22:15). The steward

was also called a "governor" in the Old Testament and has been described by commentators as a type of "prime minister."

In the New Testament, the two words often translated as "steward" are *oikonomos* (Luke 16:2–3, 1 Corinthians 4:1–2, Titus 1:7, 1 Peter 4:10), and *epitropos* (Matthew 20:8, Galatians 4:2). Several Protestant commentaries and dictionaries take the position that Christ is clearly hearkening back to Isaiah 22:15–22 when He makes this pronouncement, and that it has something to do with delegated authority in the Church He is establishing (in the same context). He applies the same language to Himself in Revelation 3:7 (cf. Job 12:14), so that his commission to Peter may be interpreted as an assignment of powers to the recipient in His stead, as a sort of authoritative representative or ambassador.

The "opening" and "shutting" (in Isaiah 22:2) appear to refer to a jurisdictional power which no one but the king (in the ancient kingdom of Judah) could override. Literally, it refers to the prime minister's prerogative to deny or allow entry to the palace, and access to the king. In Isaiah's time, this office was over three hundred years old, and is thought to have been derived by Solomon from the Egyptian model of palace functionary, or the Pharaoh's "vizier," who was second in command after the Pharaoh. This was exactly the office granted to Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 41:40–44, 45:8)

One can confidently conclude, therefore, that when Old Testament usage and the culture of the hearers is closely examined, the phrase *keys of the kingdom of heaven* must have great significance (for Peter and for the papacy) indeed, all the more so since Christ granted this honor only to St. Peter. The following commentary from Protestant scholars, takes the above position. They don't, of course, suggest that this proves an ongoing papal office, yet their reasoning is the same (or at least not at all inconsistent with) the Catholic rationale for the papacy:

1. T.W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, 1954, 205.

2. *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J.D. Douglas, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1962, "Power," 1018; "Steward," 1216.

3. *Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, ed. Allen C. Myers, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, revised edition, 1975, 622.

4. New Bible Commentary, Guthrie, D. & J.A. Motyer, editors, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 3rd edition, 1970 (reprinted, 1987, as *The Eerdmans Bible Commentary*), 603, 837.

5. R.T. France; in Morris, Leon, general editor, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press / Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1985, vol. 1: *Matthew*, 256.

6. Oscar Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, Neuchatel: Delachaux & Niestle, 1952 French edition, 183–184.

7. *Peter in the New Testament*, Brown, Raymond E., Karl P. Donfried and John Reumann, editors, Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House / New York: Paulist Press, 1973, 96–97. Common statement by a panel of eleven Catholic and Lutheran scholars.

8. J. Jeremias, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Gerhard Kittel, abridgement of Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985, 440.

9. William Barclay, *Gospel of Matthew*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975, vol. 2, 144–145.

10. William F. Albright and C.S. Mann, *Anchor Bible: Matthew*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971, 196.

11. F.F. Bruce, *The Hard Sayings of Jesus*, Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1983, 143–144.

For further references to the office of the steward in Old Testament times, see 1 Kings 4:6; 16:9; 18:3; 2 Kings 10:5; 15:5; 18:18, where the phrases used are "over the house," "steward," or "governor." In Isaiah 22:15, in the same passage to which our Lord apparently refers in Matt 16:19, Shebna, the soon-to-be deposed steward, is described in various translations as:

1. "Master of the palace" (Jerusalem Bible / New American Bible).
2. "In charge of the palace" (New International Version).

3. “Master of the household” (New Revised Standard Version).
4. “In charge of the royal household” (New American Standard Bible).
5. “Comptroller of the household” (Revised English Bible).
6. “Governor of the palace” (Moffatt).

> As the robe and the baldric, mentioned in the preceding verse, were the ensigns of power and authority, so likewise was the key the mark of office, either sacred or civil. This mark of office was likewise among the Greeks, as here in Isaiah, borne on the shoulder. In allusion to the image of the key as the ensign of power, the unlimited extent of that power is expressed with great clearness as well as force by the sole and exclusive authority to open and shut. Our Saviour, therefore, has upon a similar occasion made use of a like manner of expression, Matt 16:19; and in Rev 3:7 has applied to himself the very words of the prophet.
>
> (Adam Clarke, [Methodist], *Commentary on the Bible*, abridged ed., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1967 [orig. 1832], 581)

The following exposition from Cardinal Newman explains why an explicit demonstration of papal infallibility in the early Fathers is neither necessary nor fatal to the Catholic claims later defined at the First Vatican Council in 1870.

> Let us see how, on the principles which I have been laying down and defending, the evidence lies for the Pope’s supremacy.
>
> As to this doctrine the question is this, whether there was not from the first a certain element at work, or in existence, divinely sanctioned, which, for certain reasons, did not at once show itself upon the surface of ecclesiastical affairs, and of which events in the fourth century are the development; and whether the evidence of its existence and operation, which does occur in the earlier centuries, be it much or little, is not just such as ought to occur upon such an hypothesis.
>
> … While Apostles were on earth, there was the display neither of Bishop nor Pope; their power had no prominence, as being exercised by Apostles. In course of time, first the power of the Bishop displayed itself, and then the power of the Pope …

… St. Peter's prerogative would remain a mere letter, till the complication of ecclesiastical matters became the cause of ascertaining it. While Christians were "of one heart and soul," it would be suspended; love dispenses with laws …

When the Church, then, was thrown upon her own resources, first local disturbances gave exercise to Bishops, and next ecumenical disturbances gave exercise to Popes; and whether communion with the Pope was necessary for Catholicity would not and could not be debated till a suspension of that communion had actually occurred. it is not a greater difficulty that St. Ignatius does not write to the Asian Greeks about Popes, than that St. Paul does not write to the Corinthians about Bishops. And it is a less difficulty that the Papal supremacy was not formally acknowledged in the second century, than that there was no formal acknowledgment on the part of the Church of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity till the fourth. No doctrine is defined till it is violated …

Moreover, an international bond and a common authority could not be consolidated, were it ever so certainly provided, while persecutions lasted. If the Imperial Power checked the development of Councils, it availed also for keeping back the power of the Papacy. The Creed, the Canon, in like manner, both remained undefined. The Creed, the Canon, the Papacy, Ecumenical Councils, all began to form, as soon as the Empire relaxed its tyrannous oppression of the Church. And as it was natural that her monarchical power should display itself when the Empire became Christian, so was it natural also that further developments of that power should take place when that Empire fell. Moreover, when the power of the Holy See began to exert itself, disturbance and collision would be the necessary consequence … as St. Paul had to plead, nay, to strive for his apostolic authority, and enjoined St. Timothy, as Bishop of Ephesus, to let no man despise him: so Popes too have not therefore been ambitious because they did not establish their authority without a struggle. It was natural that Polycrates should oppose St. Victor; and natural too that St. Cyprian should both extol the See of St. Peter, yet resist it when he thought it went beyond its province …

On the whole, supposing the power to be divinely bestowed, yet in the first instance more or less dormant, a history could not be traced out more probable, more suitable to that hypothesis, than the actual course of the controversy which took place age after age upon the Papal supremacy.

It will be said that all this is a theory. Certainly it is: it is a theory to account for facts as they lie in the history, to account for so much being told us about the Papal authority in early times, and not more; a theory to reconcile what is and what is not recorded about it; and, which is the principal point, a theory to connect the words and acts of the Ante-nicene Church with that antecedent probability of a monarchical principle in the Divine Scheme, and that actual exemplification of it in the fourth century, which forms their presumptive interpretation. All depends on the strength of that presumption. Supposing there be otherwise good reason for saying that the Papal Supremacy is part of Christianity, there is nothing in the early history of the Church to contradict it …

Moreover, all this must be viewed in the light of the general probability, so much insisted on above, that doctrine cannot but develop as time proceeds and need arises, and that its developments are parts of the Divine system, and that therefore it is lawful, or rather necessary, to interpret the words and deeds of the earlier Church by the determinate teaching of the later.

(Ven. John Henry Cardinal Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1878 ed., Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1989, pp. 148–155; Part 1, Chapter 4, Section 3)

Chapter Eight

8. Historical Development in the Understanding of Doctrinal Development of the Apostolic Deposit

1. **St. Irenaeus** (c.140-c.202): *Against Heresies*, 3,24,1:

The preaching of the Church truly continues without change and is everywhere the same, and has the testimony of the Prophets and the Apostles and all their disciples … That in which we have faith is a firm system directed to the salvation of men; and, since it has been received by the Church, we guard it. Constantly it has its youth renewed by the Spirit of God, as if it were some precious deposit in an excellent vessel; and it causes the vessel containing it also to be rejuvenated … For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God, there the Church and every grace. The Spirit, however, is Truth.

(From William A. Jurgens (editor and translator), *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1970, vol. 1 of 3, 94)

2. **Origen** (c.185–254): *The Fundamental Doctrines*, 1, Preface, 2–3

Although there are many who believe that they themselves hold to the teachings of Christ, there are yet some among them who think differently from their predecessors. The teaching of the Church has indeed been handed down through an order of succession from the Apostles, and remains in the Churches even to the present time. That alone is to be believed as the truth which is in no way at variance with ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition.

It ought to be known, however, that the holy Apostles, in preaching the faith of Christ, treated with the utmost clarity of certain matters which they believed to be of absolute necessity to all believers, even to those who

seemed somewhat dull in regard to the investigation of divine knowledge. Naturally, they left the grounds of their assertions to be investigated by those who would deserve the excellent gifts of the Spirit, and to those who would receive in a pre-eminent degree through the same Holy Spirit the gifts of language, of wisdom, and of knowledge. In other matters, indeed, they stated that certain things are so; but as to the how and wherefore of their being so, they were silent. They did this, indeed, so that such of their successors as were more studious and who would be lovers of wisdom might have a subject of exercise on which to display the fruit of their talents—those persons, I mean, who should prepare themselves to be fit and worthy for the reception of wisdom.

(Jurgens, *ibid.*, vol. 1, 190)

3. **St. Gregory of Nyssa** (c.330-c.395): *Catechetical Orations*, 3

Truth passes in the mean between these two conceptions, destroying each heresy, and yet accepting what is useful to it from each. The Jewish dogma is destroyed by the acceptance of the Logos and by the belief in the Spirit, while the polytheistic error of the Greek school is made to vanish by the unity of the [divine] nature abrogating this notion of plurality. Yet again, of the Jewish conception, let the unity of the nature stand; and of the Greek, only the distinction as to persons … It is as if the number of the Trinity were a remedy in the case of those who are in error as to the One, and the assertion of the unity for those whose beliefs are dispersed among a number of divinities.

(From Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*: vol. 1 of 5: *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971, 66–67; PG 45:17–20)

4. **St. Augustine** (354–430): *The City of God*, Book 16, chapter 2

Chapter 2.—What Was Prophetically Prefigured in the Sons of Noah.

The things which then were hidden are now sufficiently revealed by the actual events which have followed. For who can carefully and intelligently consider these things without recognizing them accomplished in Christ?…

even the heretics yield an advantage to those that make proficiency, according to the apostle's saying, "There must also be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." Whence, too, it is elsewhere said, "The son that receives instruction will be wise, and he uses the foolish as his servant." For while the hot restlessness of heretics stirs questions about many articles of the catholic faith, the necessity of defending them forces us both to investigate them more accurately, to understand them more clearly, and to proclaim them more earnestly; and the question mooted by an adversary becomes the occasion of instruction … These secrets of divine Scripture we investigate as well as we can. All will not accept our interpretation with equal confidence, but all hold it certain that these things were neither done nor recorded without some foreshadowing of future events, and that they are to be referred only to Christ and His church, which is the city of God, proclaimed from the very beginning of human history by figures which we now see everywhere accomplished …

5. **St. Augustine**: *Commentary on Psalm 55* (21)

(online at: http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF1-08/npnf1-08-62.htm#P1494_1069171)

[I have rephrased and changed the sentence order in parts for the purpose of syntactical improvement; the above URL can be consulted for the very awkward, almost unreadable literal translation]

… by heretics the Catholic Church has been vindicated, … For many things lay hidden in the Scriptures: and when heretics, who had been cut off, troubled the Church of God with questions, then those things which lay hidden were opened, and the will of God was understood … Many men that could understand and expound the Scriptures very excellently, were hidden among the people of God, and they did not declare the solution of difficult questions, until a reviler again urged them. For was the doctrine of the Trinity perfectly expounded upon before the Arians snarled at it? Was repentance perfectly treated before the opposition of the Novatians? Likewise, Baptism was not perfectly understood, before rebaptizers from the outside contradicted; nor even the very oneness of Christ … until after this separation began to press upon the weak: in order that those who

knew how to deal with and solve these questions (lest the weak should perish, vexed with the questions of the ungodly), should bring out into the open the dark things of the Law, by their discourses and disputations …

[see also *Confessions*, VII, 19]

6. Protestant Church historian **Philip Schaff** on development of doctrine and St. Augustine's views:

The history of doctrines or dogmas … Its object is to show how the mind of the church has gradually apprehended and unfolded the divine truths of revelation, how the teachings of scripture have been formulated and shaped into dogmas, and grown into creeds and confessions of faith, or systems of doctrine stamped with public authority. This growth of the church in the knowledge of the infallible word of God is a constant struggle against error, misbelief, and unbelief; and the history of heresies is an essential part of the history of doctrines. Every important dogma now professed by the Christian church is the result of a severe conflict with error.

(*History of the Christian Church*, vol. 1: Apostolic Christianity: A.D. 1–100, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975 [originally 1910], 10)

Augustine … manifestly acknowledges a gradual advancement of the church doctrine, which reaches its corresponding expression from time to time through the general councils; but a progress within the truth, without positive error.

(*Ibid.*, vol. 3: *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974 [orig. 1910], 344)

Within the limits of the Jewish theocracy and Catholic Christianity Augustin admits the idea of historical development or a gradual progress from a lower to higher grades of knowledge, yet always in harmony with Catholic truth. He would not allow revolutions and radical changes or different types of Christianity. "The best thinking" (says Dr. Flint, in his *Philosophy of History in Europe*, I. 40), "at once the most judicious and liberal, among those who are called the Christian fathers, on the subject of the progress of Christianity as an organization and system, is that of St.

Augustin, as elaborated and applied by Vincent of Lerins in his 'Commonitorium,' where we find substantially the same conception of the development of the Church and Christian doctrine, which, within the present century, De Maistre has made celebrated in France, Möhler in Germany, and Newman in England.

(Introduction to *City of God*, 38-volume set of the Church Fathers, December 10, 1886: http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF1-02/npnf1-02-03.htm)

7. **St. Vincent of Lerins** (d. c.450): *The Commonitorium* (*Notebooks*) (c. 434): "For the Antiquity and Universality of the Catholic Faith Against the Profane Novelties of All Heresies" (translated by the Rev. C. A. Heurtley, D.D., the Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, and Canon of Christ Church)

[online at: http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF2-11/Npnf2-11-26.htm#TopOfPage)

Chapter II.

A General Rule for distinguishing the Truth of the Catholic Faith from the Falsehood of Heretical Pravity.

[4.] I Have often then inquired earnestly and attentively of very many men eminent for sanctity and learning, how and by what sure and so to speak universal rule I may be able to distinguish the truth of Catholic faith from the falsehood of heretical pravity; and I have always, and in almost every instance, received an answer to this effect: That whether I or any one else should wish to detect the frauds and avoid the snares of heretics as they rise, and to continue sound and complete in the Catholic faith, we must, the Lord helping, fortify our own belief in two ways; first, by the authority of the Divine Law, and then, by the Tradition of the Catholic Church.

[5.] But here some one perhaps will ask, Since the canon of Scripture is complete, and sufficient of itself for everything, and more than sufficient, what need is there to join with it the authority of the Church's interpretation? For this reason,—because, owing to the depth of Holy Scripture, all do not accept it in one and the same sense, but one

understands its words in one way, another in another; so that it seems to be capable of as many interpretations as there are interpreters. For Novatian expounds it one way, Sabellius another, Donatus another, Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, another, Photinus, Apollinaris, Priscillian, another, Iovinian, Pelagius, Celestius, another, lastly, Nestorius another. Therefore, it is very necessary, on account of so great intricacies of such various error, that the rule for the right understanding of the prophets and apostles should be framed in accordance with the standard of Ecclesiastical and Catholic interpretation.

[6.] Moreover, in the Catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all. For that is truly and in the strictest sense "Catholic," which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally. This rule we shall observe if we follow universality, antiquity, consent. We shall follow universality if we confess that one faith to be true, which the whole Church throughout the world confesses; antiquity, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is manifest were notoriously held by our holy ancestors and fathers; consent, in like manner, if in antiquity itself we adhere to the consentient definitions and determinations of all, or at the least of almost all priests and doctors.

… Chapter VII.

How Heretics, craftily cite obscure passages in ancient writers in support of their own novelties.

[19.] This condemnation, indeed, seems to have been providentially promulgated as though with a special view to the fraud of those who, contriving to dress up a heresy under a name other than its own, get hold often of the works of some ancient writer, not very clearly expressed, which, owing to the very obscurity of their own doctrine, have the appearance of agreeing with it, so that they get the credit of being neither the first nor the only persons who have held it. This wickedness of theirs, in my judgment, is doubly hateful: first, because they are not afraid to invite others to drink of the poison of heresy; and secondly, because with profane breath, as though fanning smouldering embers into flame, they blow upon the memory of each holy man, …

… Chapter XX.

The Notes of a true Catholic.

[48.] This being the case, he is the true and genuine Catholic who loves the truth of God, who loves the Church, who loves the Body of Christ, who esteems divine religion and the Catholic Faith above every thing, above the authority, above the regard, above the genius, above the eloquence, above the philosophy, of every man whatsoever; who sets light by all of these, and continuing steadfast and established in the faith, resolves that he will believe that, and that only, which he is sure the Catholic Church has held universally and from ancient time; but that whatsoever new and unheard —of doctrine he shall find to have been furtively introduced by some one or another, besides that of all, or contrary to that of all the saints, this, he will understand, does not pertain to religion, but is permitted as a trial, being instructed especially by the words of the blessed Apostle Paul, who writes thus in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, "There must needs be heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest among you:" as though he should say, This is the reason why the authors of Heresies are not forthwith rooted up by God, namely, that they who are approved may be made manifest that is, that it may be apparent of each individual, how tenacious and faithful and steadfast he is in his love of the Catholic faith.

… Chapter XXIII.

On Development in Religious Knowledge.

[54.] But some one will say, perhaps, Shall there, then, be no progress in Christ's Church? Certainly; all possible progress. For what being is there, so envious of men, so full of hatred to God, who would seek to forbid it? Yet on condition that it be real progress, not alteration of the faith. For progress requires that the subject be enlarged in itself, alteration, that it be transformed into something else. The intelligence, then, the knowledge, the wisdom, as well of individuals as of all, as well of one man as of the whole Church, ought, in the course of ages and centuries, to increase and make much and vigorous progress; but yet only in its own kind; that is to say, in the same doctrine, in the same sense, and in the same meaning.

[55.] The growth of religion in the soul must be analogous to the growth of the body, which, though in process of years it is developed and attains its full size, yet remains still the same. There is a wide difference between the flower of youth and the maturity of age; yet they who were once young are still the same now that they have become old, insomuch that though the stature and outward form of the individual are changed, yet his nature is one and the same, his person is one and the same. An infant's limbs are small, a young man's large, yet the infant and the young man are the same. Men when full grown have the same number of joints that they had when children; and if there be any to which maturer age has given birth these were already present in embryo, so that nothing new is produced in them when old which was not already latent in them when children. This, then, is undoubtedly the true and legitimate rule of progress, this the established and most beautiful order of growth, that mature age ever develops in the man those parts and forms which the wisdom of the Creator had already framed beforehand in the infant. Whereas, if the human form were changed into some shape belonging to another kind, or at any rate, if the number of its limbs were increased or diminished, the result would be that the whole body would become either a wreck or a monster, or, at the least, would be impaired and enfeebled.

[56.] In like manner, it behoves Christian doctrine to follow the same laws of progress, so as to be consolidated by years, enlarged by time, refined by age, and yet, withal, to continue uncorrupt and unadulterate, complete and perfect in all the measurement of its parts, and, so to speak, in all its proper members and senses, admitting no change, no waste of its distinctive property, no variation in its limits.

[57.] For example: Our forefathers in the old time sowed wheat in the Church's field. It would be most unmeet and iniquitous if we, their descendants, instead of the genuine truth of corn, should reap the counterfeit error of tares. This rather should be the result,—there should be no discrepancy between the first and the last. From doctrine which was sown as wheat, we should reap, in the increase, doctrine of the same kind-wheat also; so that when in process of time any of the original seed is developed, and now flourishes under cultivation, no change may ensue in the character of the plant. There may supervene shape, form, variation in

outward appearance, but the nature of each kind must remain the same. God forbid that those rose-beds of Catholic interpretation should be converted into thorns and thistles. God forbid that in that spiritual paradise from plants of cinnamon and balsam darnel and wolfsbane should of a sudden shoot forth.

Therefore, whatever has been sown by the fidelity of the Fathers in this husbandry of God's Church, the same ought to be cultivated and taken care of by the industry of their children, the same ought to flourish and ripen, the same ought to advance and go forward to perfection. For it is right that those ancient doctrines of heavenly philosophy should, as time goes on, be cared for, smoothed, polished; but not that they should be changed, not that they should be maimed, not that they should be mutilated. They may receive proof, illustration, definiteness; but they must retain withal their completeness, their integrity, their characteristic properties.

[58.] For if once this license of impious fraud be admitted, I dread to say in how great danger religion will be of being utterly destroyed and annihilated. For if any one part of Catholic truth be given up, another, and another, and another will thenceforward be given up as a matter of course, and the several individual portions having been rejected, what will follow in the end but the rejection of the whole? On the other hand, if what is new begins to be mingled with what is old, foreign with domestic, profane with sacred, the custom will of necessity creep on universally, till at last the Church will have nothing left untampered with, nothing unadulterated, nothing sound, nothing pure; but where formerly there was a sanctuary of chaste and undefiled truth, thenceforward there will be a brothel of impious and base errors. May God's mercy avert this wickedness from the minds of his servants; be it rather the frenzy of the ungodly.

[59.] But the Church of Christ, the careful and watchful guardian of the doctrines deposited in her charge, never changes anything in them, never diminishes, never adds, does not cut off what is necessary, does not add what is superfluous, does not lose her own, does not appropriate what is another's, but while dealing faithfully and judiciously with ancient doctrine, keeps this one object carefully in view,—if there be anything which antiquity has left shapeless and rudimentary, to fashion and polish

it, if anything already reduced to shape and developed, to consolidate and strengthen it, if any already ratified and defined to keep and guard it. Finally, what other object have Councils ever aimed at in their decrees, than to provide that what was before believed in simplicity should in future be believed intelligently, that what was before preached coldly should in future be preached earnestly, that what was before practised negligently should thenceforward be practised with double solicitude? This, I say, is what the Catholic Church, roused by the novelties of heretics, has accomplished by the decrees of her Councils,—this, and nothing else, —she has thenceforward consigned to posterity in writing what she had received from those of olden times only by tradition, comprising a great amount of matter in a few words, and often, for the better understanding, designating an old article of the faith by the characteristic of a new name.

Schaff states about St. Vincent:

... Vincentius Lerinensis teaches, that the church doctrine passes indeed through various stages of growth in knowledge, and becomes more and more clearly defined in opposition to ever-rising errors, but can never become altered or dismembered.

(Schaff, *ibid*., vol. 3: Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974 [orig. 1910], 344)

8. **St. Thomas Aquinas** (1225–1274)

[citations are either from the Second and Revised Edition of the *Summa Theologiae*, 1920; literally translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province; or by Dr. Christopher Kaczor, author of the superb article, "Thomas Aquinas on the Development of Doctrine," available online at:

http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/faculty/ckaczor/articles/development.htm#_edn2]

In every council of the Church a symbol of faith has been drawn up to meet some prevalent error condemned in the council at that time. Hence subsequent councils are not to be described as making a new symbol of faith; but what was implicitly contained in the first symbol was explained by some addition directed against rising heresies. Hence in the decision of

the council of Chalcedon it is declared that those who were congregated together in the council of Constantinople, handed down the doctrine about the Holy Ghost, not implying that there was anything wanting in the doctrine of their predecessors who had gathered together at Nicaea, but explaining what those fathers had understood of the matter. Therefore, because at the time of the ancient councils the error of those who said that the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Son had not arisen, it was not necessary to make any explicit declaration on that point; whereas, later on, when certain errors rose up, another council [Council of Rome, under Pope Damasus] assembled in the west, the matter was explicitly defined by the authority of the Roman Pontiff, by whose authority also the ancient councils were summoned and confirmed. Nevertheless the truth was contained implicitly in the belief that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father.

(*Summa Theologiae* [ST] 1, q.36, a.2 ad 2)

We ought not to say about God anything which is not found in Holy Scripture either explicitly or implicitly. But although we do not find it verbally expressed in Holy Scripture that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son, still we do find it in the sense of Scripture, especially where the Son says, speaking of the Holy Ghost, "He will glorify Me, because He shall receive of Mine" (Jn. 16:14). It is also a rule of Holy Scripture that whatever is said of the Father, applies to the Son …

(ST 1, q.36, a.2, ad 1)

Many of the gentiles received revelations of Christ, as is clear from their predictions. Thus we read (Job 19:25): "I know that my Redeemer liveth." The Sibyl too foretold certain things about Christ, as Augustine states (Contra Faust. xiii, 15).… If, however, some were saved without receiving any revelation, they were not saved without faith in a Mediator, for, though they did not believe in Him explicitly, they did, nevertheless, have implicit faith through believing in Divine providence, since they believed that God would deliver mankind in whatever way was pleasing to Him, and according to the revelation of the Spirit to those who knew the truth, as stated in Job 35:11: "Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth."

(ST 2-2, q.2, a.7 ad 3)

Reason sees immediately certain things, which are per se nota, in which are contained implicitly certain other things which it is not possible to understand save through the work of reason, by explaining those things which are contained implicitly in the principles.

(*De trinitate*, q.2, a.3, sc1)

The truth of faith is sufficiently explicit in the teaching of Christ and the apostles. But since, according to 2 Pt. 3:16, some men are so evil-minded as to pervert the apostolic teaching and other doctrines and Scriptures to their own destruction, it was necessary as time went on to express the faith more explicitly against the errors which arose.

(ST 2-2, q.1, a.10 ad 1)

Since errors arising concerning the faith gave an occasion to the doctors of the Church that matters of faith might be passed on with greater care for the elimination of arising errors; it is clear that holy teachers who were before Arius did not so speak concerning the unity of the divine essence as teachers who followed. And similarly it happens concerning other errors, not only among diverse teachers but even in that most excellent of teachers Augustine, it appears clearly. For in the works that he composed after the heresy of the Pelagians arose, he spoke more cautiously concerning the freedom of the will than he had in the books which he composed before the forementioned heresy arose. In those books in which he defends the freedom of the will against the Manicheans, he said certain things which the Pelagians, opponents of divine grace, took up in defense of their errors. And so it is no wonder, after the rise of various errors, if modern teachers of the faith speak more cautiously and seemingly perfectly concerning the doctrine of faith so that all heresy might be avoided. Hence, if some things in the writings of ancient teachers is found which is not said with as much caution as maintained by moderns, they are not to be condemned or cast aside; but it is not necessary to embrace these things, but interpret them reverently.

(Preface to *Contra errores Greacorum*)

And these errors, for all that, exercised the talents of the faithful toward a more diligent penetration and understanding of divine truth, just as the evils which occur in creatures are ordered by God to some good.

(*Summa contra Gentiles*, IV, ch.55, [9])

I answer that, As stated above (Objection 1), a new edition of the symbol becomes necessary in order to set aside the errors that may arise. Consequently to publish a new edition of the symbol belongs to that authority which is empowered to decide matters of faith finally, so that they may be held by all with unshaken faith. Now this belongs to the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff, "to whom the more important and more difficult questions that arise in the Church are referred," as stated in the Decretals [Dist. xvii, Can. 5. Hence our Lord said to Peter whom he made Sovereign Pontiff (Lk. 22:32): "I have prayed for thee," Peter, "that thy faith fail not, and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." The reason of this is that there should be but one faith of the whole Church, according to 1 Cor. 1:10: "That you all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you": and this could not be secured unless any question of faith that may arise be decided by him who presides over the whole Church, so that the whole Church may hold firmly to his decision. Consequently it belongs to the sole authority of the Sovereign Pontiff to publish a new edition of the symbol, as do all other matters which concern the whole Church, such as to convoke a general council and so forth.

(ST 2-2, q.1, a.10: "Whether it belongs to the Sovereign Pontiff to draw up a symbol of faith?")

… since the prophet's mind is a defective instrument, as stated above, even true prophets know not all that the Holy Ghost means by the things they see, or speak, or even do.

(ST 2-2, q.173, a.4)

The purpose of Scripture is the instruction of people; however this instruction of the people by the Scriptures cannot take place save through the exposition of the saints.

(*Quodlibet* XII, q.16, a. unicus [27])

The faith is able to be better explained in this respect each day and was made more explicit through the study of the saints.

(*Sent* III. 25, 2, 2, 1, ad 5. See also: *Quodlibet* XII, q.16, a. unicus [27]; *Summa contra Gentiles*, III, 154, [19]; In 1 Cor. 12, lect. 2)

9. **G.K. Chesterton**: *from St. Thomas Aquinas: "The Dumb Ox"* (1933):

I. On Two Friars

... in spite of all that was once said about superstition, the Dark Ages and the sterility of Scholasticism, it was in every sense a movement of enlargement, always moving towards greater light and even greater liberty. Second, in spite of all that was said later on about progress and the Renaissance and forerunners of modern thought, it was almost entirely a movement of orthodox theological enthusiasm, unfolded from within. It was not a compromise with the world, or a surrender to heathens or heretics, or even a mere borrowing of external aids, even when it did borrow them. In so far as it did reach out to the light of common day, it was like the action of a plant which by its own force thrusts out its leaves into the sun; not like the action of one who merely lets daylight into a prison.

In short, it was what is technically called a Development in doctrine. But there seems to be a queer ignorance, not only about the technical, but the natural meaning of the word Development. The critics of Catholic theology seem to suppose that it is not so much an evolution as an evasion; that it is at best an adaptation. They fancy that its very success is the success of surrender. But that is not the natural meaning of the word Development. When we talk of a child being well-developed, we mean that he has grown bigger and stronger with his own strength; not that he is padded with borrowed pillows or walks on stilts to make him look taller. When we say that a puppy develops into a dog, we do not mean that his growth is a gradual compromise with a cat; we mean that he becomes more doggy and not less. Development is the expansion of all the possibilities and implications of a doctrine, as there is time to distinguish them and draw them out; and the point here is that the enlargement of medieval theology was simply the full comprehension of that theology. And it is of

primary importance to realise this fact first, about the time of the great Dominican and the first Franciscan, because their tendency, humanistic and naturalistic in a hundred ways, was truly the development of the supreme doctrine, which was also the dogma of all dogmas. It is in this that the popular poetry of St. Francis and the almost rationalistic prose of St. Thomas appear most vividly as part of the same movement. There are both great growths of Catholic development, depending upon external things only as every living and growing thing depends on them; that is, it digests and transforms them, but continues in its own image and not in theirs. A Buddhist or a Communist might dream of two things which simultaneously eat each other, as the perfect form of unification. But it is not so with living things. St. Francis was content to call himself the Troubadour of God; but not content with the God of the Troubadours. St. Thomas did not reconcile Christ to Aristotle; he reconciled Aristotle to Christ.

Yes; in spite of the contrasts that are as conspicuous and even comic as the comparison between the fat man and the thin man, the tall man and the short: in spite of the contrast between the vagabond and the student, between the apprentice and the aristocrat, between the book-hater and the book-lover, between the wildest of all missionaries and the mildest of all professors, the great fact of medieval history is that these two great men were doing the same great work; one in the study and the other in the street. They were not bringing something new into Christianity; in the sense of something heathen or heretical into Christianity; on the contrary, they were bringing Christianity into Christendom. But they were bringing it back against the pressure of certain historic tendencies, which had hardened into habits in many great schools and authorities in the Christian Church; and they were using tools and weapons which seemed to many people to be associated with heresy or heathenry. St. Francis used Nature much as St. Thomas used Aristotle; and to some they seemed to be using a Pagan goddess and a Pagan sage. What they were really doing, and especially what St. Thomas was really doing, will form the main matter of these pages; but it is convenient to be able to compare him from the first with a more popular saint; because we may thus sum up the substance of it in the most popular way. Perhaps it would sound too paradoxical to say

that these two saints saved us from Spirituality; a dreadful doom. Perhaps it may be misunderstood if I say that St. Francis, for all his love of animals, saved us from being Buddhists; and that St. Thomas, for all his love of Greek philosophy, saved us from being Platonists. But it is best to say the truth in its simplest form; that they both reaffirmed the Incarnation, by bringing God back to earth. This analogy, which may seem rather remote, is really perhaps the best practical preface to the philosophy of St. Thomas.

10. **Pope Pius IX** (r. 1846–1878)

… For the Church of Christ, watchful guardian that she is, and defender of the dogmas deposited with her, never changes anything, never diminishes anything, never adds anything to them; but with all diligence she treats the ancient documents faithfully and wisely; if they really are of ancient origin and if the faith of the Fathers has transmitted them, she strives to investigate and explain them in such a way that the ancient dogmas of heavenly doctrine will be made evident and clear, but will retain their full, integral, and proper nature, and will grow only within their own genus—that is, within the same dogma, in the same sense and the same meaning.

(Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*, December 8, 1854 [where Mary's Immaculate Conception was defined ex cathedra]; in *Papal Teachings: The Church*, selected and arranged by the Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, tr. Mother E. O'Gorman, Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1962, 71)

When they have judged it timely … Pontiffs have not neglected to convoke General Councils in order to act with and unite their strength to the strength of the bishops of the whole Catholic world … to provide, in their foresight and their wisdom, for taking the most efficacious means to procure in the first place the definition of the dogmas of the faith, the destruction of widespread errors, the defense, illumination, and development of Catholic doctrine …

(Apostolic Letter *Aeterni Patris*, June 29, 1868, convoking the episcopate to the First Ecumenical Vatican Council; in O'Gorman, *ibid.*, 193)

Religion is in no sense the enemy of progress and of culture in the area of science and the arts, and that it is not itself either stationary or frozen in inertia. If there is an immobility which in fact she cannot renounce, it is

the immobility of the principles and doctrines which are divinely revealed. These can never change … [Heb 13:8] But for religious truths, there is progress only in their development, their penetration, their practice: in themselves they remain essentially immutable. Therefore, We do not Ourselves wish to make new dogmatic definitions, as some people suppose. All the truths divinely revealed have always been believed; they have always been a part of the deposit confided to the Church. But some of them must from time to time, according to circumstances and necessity, be placed in a stronger light and more firmly established. This is the sense in which the Church draws from her treasure new things … [Matt 13:52] … the old, vetera, always continuing to teach the doctrines which are now beyond all controversy; the new, nova, by new declarations giving a firm and incontestable basis to those doctrines which, though they have always been professed by her, have nonetheless been the object of recent attacks.

(Allocution to the Religious Art Exposition, Rome, May 16, 1870; in O'Gorman, *ibid.*, 208)

11. **James Cardinal Gibbons**: *The Faith of Our Fathers*, New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1876 [rev. ed., 1917], 9–12:

No new dogma, unknown to the Apostles, not contained in the primitive Christian revelation, can be admitted (John 14:16; 15:15; 16:13) … doctrines which know neither variation nor decay … Nor is it necessary that those who receive this revelation in the first instance should be explicitly acquainted with its full import, or cognizant of all its bearings. Truth never changes; it is the same now, yesterday, and forever, in itself; but our relations towards truth may change, for that which is hidden from us today may become known to us tomorrow … In the Apostolic revelation and preaching some truths might have been contained implicitly … as the rising controversies or new errors gave occasion for it, there were more explicit declarations of what was formerly implicitly believed. In the doctrine of the supreme power of Peter, as the visible foundation of the Church, we have the implied assertion of many rights and duties which belong to the centre of unity …

So, too, in the beginning many truths might have been proposed somewhat obscurely or less clearly; they might have been less urgently insisted upon,

because there was no heresy, no contrary teaching to render a more explicit declaration necessary. Now, a doctrine which is implicitly, less clearly, not so earnestly proposed, may be overlooked, misunderstood, called into question; consequently, it may happen that some articles are now universally believed in the Church, in regard to which doubts and controversies existed in former ages, even within the bosom of the Church … progress in faith we can and do admit; but the truth is not changed thereby. As Albertus Magnus says: "It would be more correct to style this the progress of the believer in the faith, than of the faith in the believer."

To show that this kind of progress is to be admitted only two things are to be proved: l. That some divinely revealed truths should be contained in the Apostolic teaching implicitly, less clearly explained, less urgently pressed. And this can be denied only by those who hold that the Bible … is clear in every part, and could be readily understood by all from the beginning … 2. That the Church can, in process of time, as occasions arise, declare, explain, urge. This is proved not only from the Scriptures and the Fathers, but even from the conduct of Protestants themselves, who often boast of the care and assiduity with which they 'search the Scriptures' and study out their meaning … And why? To obtain more light; to understand better what is revealed … The only question which could arise on this point is … about the authority of the Church to propose and to determine that sense. So that, after all, we are always brought back to the only real point of division and dispute … namely, to the authority of the Church.

12. **Sylvester J. Hunter, S.J.**: *Outlines of Dogmatic Theology*, vol. 1 of 3, New York: Benziger Brothers, 1894, 156, 159, 161–164:

No addition has been made to the body of doctrine which constitutes the Christian Revelation since the death of the last survivor among the Apostles … Also … it may be admitted that continual growth is going on in our knowledge of Christian doctrine … the theologians of the Church continually discover, and will continue to discover, more and more of the fulness of meaning contained in these revelations, and from time to time the Church imprints the seal of her infallible approval upon their explicit statements of what was heretofore known implicitly alone … No serious-minded man will suppose that the truths which it has pleased God to

reveal contain no more than is apparent at the first glance; in fact they are full of depths of meaning …

… three stages of implicit belief, doubt and controversy, and explicit avowal, sometimes followed by formal definition, may be recognized in the history of many points of doctrine. A superficial study of the history will sometimes suggest the idea that the doctrine was new when the first critical doubts were started; but in the course of the discussion it becomes clear that there is nothing new in the substance of the doctrine, but only in the mode of statement. These three stages are all seen in the cases of Baptism by heretics, of the Real Presence, and of the Immaculate Conception, but in no instance better than in the controversy concerning the Canon of Scripture.

The Vincentian Canon.—The explanation just given serves to remove the difficulty which is sometimes felt in understanding how the Catholic Church can be said to be unchanging in faith at the same time that cases are easily produced where a matter which was not a defined doctrine at one date, subsequently comes to be defined. This is no more a change than it is a change for the germ that is in a seed to unfold and become a tree. It is no change of doctrine when that which has always been held implicitly, becomes the subject of an explicit declaration.

13. **Robert Hugh Benson**: *The Religion of the Plain Man*, Long Prairie, MN: Neumann Press, 1906, 56–57, 60–62:

Life is the principle of growth, and growth the evidence of life. A statue may be more perfect than a body in grace and proportion, yet it does not grow, and therefore is not alive … To compare the Church to a body or a seed, and to deny it the power of growth and expansion, is to utter a contradiction in terms … to rob the metaphors of Christ and His apostles of their essential meaning … For them [Protestants] the Church of Christ is a statue carved by the hand of God, polished possibly by workmen of the subapostolic age, which it is their duty to keep undefiled. Lichens encroach upon it by lapse of time … and these must continually be removed … As for the theory that the Church is alive, but reached its full growth about the end of the first, 2nd, 4th, or 6th century … these are purely arbitrary points … It is ridiculous to say that St. Paul looked forward to the end of the 6th

century as the culmination of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ … Any such view is indeed to make null the word of God by human traditions that have not even common sense to recommend them … It is as arbitrary as to say that the perfection of a child's growth is reached at the age of 14 … Yet … there is another serious accusation brought against the Roman Church. What of all those foreign bodies that she has incorporated into her system? What of incense … Transubstantiation … canonization … and all the rest?… 'Exactly,' cries the Catholic voice … We confess frankly that we assimilate exterior things; but so do the acorn and the child … Arius complained that a new phrase was added to the old Creed when Christ was called 'of one substance with the Father.' 'You are adding to the faith,' he cried, … 'it is I, then, who am the old Catholic, it is you who are innovators and heretics.' 'It is not so,' answered the Church. 'I incorporate the Greek word to express myself more fully; as an acorn incorporates earth to declare the glorious life that is hid within itself; as one day I may declare Mary immaculate, and the Pope infallible. First the seed, then the fibre, then the sapling, then the tree.'

14. ***Catholic Encyclopedia*** (1908): "Revelation," by G.H. Joyce:

It may however be further asked, whether the Christian Revelation does not receive increment through the development of doctrine. During the last half of the nineteenth century the question of doctrinal development was widely debated. Owing to Guenther's erroneous teaching that the doctrines of the faith assume a new sense as human science progresses, the Vatican Council declared once for all that the meaning of the Church's dogmas is immutable (De Fide Cath., cap. iv, can. iii). On the other hand it explicitly recognizes that there is a legitimate mode of development, and cites to that effect (op. cit., cap. iv) the words of Vincent of Lirins: "Let understanding science and wisdom [regarding the Church's doctrine] progress and make large increase in each and in all, in the individual and in the whole Church, as ages and centuries advance: but let it be solely in its own order, retaining, that is, the same dogma, the same sense, the same import" (Commonit. 28). Two of the most eminent theological writers of the period, Cardinal Franzelin and Cardinal Newman, have on very different lines dealt with the progress and nature of this development. Cardinal Franzelin in his "De Divina Traditione et Scriptura" (pt. XXII

VI) has principally in view the Hegelian theories of Guenther. He consequently lays the chief stress on the identity at all points of the intellectual datum, and explains developmentalmost exclusively as a process of logical deduction. Cardinal Newman wrote his "Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine" in the course of the two years (1843–45) immediately preceding his reception into the Catholic Church. He was called on to deal with different adversaries, viz., the Protestants who justified their separation from the main body of Christians on the ground that Rome had corrupted primitive teaching by a series of additions. In that work he examines in detail the difference between a corruption and a development. He shows how a true and fertile idea is endowed with a vital and assimilative energy of its own, in virtue of which, without undergoing the least substantive change, it attains to an ever completer expression, as the course of time brings it into contact with new aspects of truth or forces it into collision with new errors: the life of the idea is shown to be analogous to an organic development. He provides a series of tests distinguishing a true development from a corruption, chief among them being the preservation of type, and the continuity of principles; and then, applying the tests to the case of the additions of Roman teaching, shows that these have the marks not of corruptions but of true and legitimate developments. The theory, though less scholastic in its form than that of Franzelin, is in perfect conformity with orthodox belief. Newman no less than his Jesuit contemporary teaches that the whole doctrine, alike in its later as in its earlier forms, was contained in the original revelation given to the Church by Our Lord and His Apostles, and that its identity is guaranteed to us by the infallible magisterium of the Church. The claim of certain Modernist writers that their views on the evolution of dogma were connected with Newman's theory of development is the merest figment.

15. **Pope St. Pius X** (r. 1903–1914)

Pope St. Pius X condemned the heretical notion of "evolution of dogmas" in his 1907 encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (On The Doctrine Of The Modernists):

> … Thus the way is open to the intrinsic evolution of dogma. Here we have an immense structure of sophisms which ruin and wreck all

religion. (section 12 [end])

13. Dogma is not only able, but ought to evolve and to be changed. This is strongly affirmed by the Modernists, and clearly flows from their principles. (beginning of sec. 13)

To the laws of evolution everything is subject under penalty of death—dogma, Church, worship, the Books we revere as sacred, even faith itself. The enunciation of this principle will not be a matter of surprise to anyone who bears in mind what the Modernists have had to say about each of these subjects. Having laid down this law of evolution, the Modernists themselves teach us how it operates. (sec. 26)

It was thought by some that Cardinal Newman's orthodox theory of doctrinal development was included in this condemnation, and that Newman was a modernist. Edward Thomas O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, defended Newman (whom he had known personally) from these wrongheaded and scurrilous charges in a 1908 pamphlet, entitled "Cardinal Newman and the Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*. "Here is an excerpt:

(3) With regard to the theory of the development of Christian Doctrine, two questions entirely distinct from one another have to be considered in relation to Newman: (a) is his theory admissible according to the principles of Catholic Theology, and (b) is it covered, or touched in any wise, by the condemnations of the recent Encyclical.

The first of these questions I leave on one side now, venturing merely to express, with all submission, my personal opinion, little as it is worth, that in its broad outlines it is thoroughly sound and orthodox, and most serviceable for the interpretation of the facts of the history of dogma.

As to the second, I cannot see how there can be room for doubt. Newman's whole doctrine was not only different from that of the Modernists, but so contrary to it in essence and fundamental principle, that I cannot conceive how, by any implication, it could be involved in their condemnation. Nothing less than an explicit statement by the supreme authority of the Holy See would convince me to the contrary. I see no common ground in both systems. The word development is the

> only thing which they hold in common. They do not mean the same thing by Christianity, by dogma, by religion, by Church. They do not start from the same first principles, and consequently they are as separate as the poles.

Pope St. Pius X himself—in the same year: 1908—wrote a letter to Bishop O'Dwyer, thoroughly approving of his pamphlet. Here is a partial translation:

> Be assured that we strongly approve of your pamphlet proving that the works of Cardinal Newman—far from being at variance with our encyclical—are actually in close agreement with it … For even though in the works written before his conversion to the Catholic faith one might find statements which bear a certain likeness to some Modernist formulae, you rightly deny that they in any way support them … But, as for the many and important books he composed as a Catholic, it is hardly necessary to repel the charges of affinity with the Modernist heresy … Indeed though things might be found which appear different from the usual theological mode of expression, nothing can be found which would arouse any suspicion of his faith … an excellent and most learned man … You have done what you could among your own people and especially the English, to prevent those who have been abusing his name from deceiving the unlearned.
>
> (from Christopher Hollis, *Newman and the Modern World*, London: The Catholic Book Club, 1967, 200)

This letter was included in the *Acta Sanctae Sedis* (vol. 41, 1908), which is a collection of official papal pronouncements; thus, it can, with full justification, be regarded as a binding interpretation of his own encyclical. Likewise, in Pope St. Pius X's Oath Against the Errors of Modernism (1910) development of doctrine is upheld, just as evolution of dogma is rejected (as they are two different things, and opposites):

> Likewise I reprove the error of those who affirm that the faith proposed by the Church can be repugnant to history, and that the Catholic dogmas, in the way they are understood now, cannot accord with the truer origins of the Christian religion.

Cardinal Merry del Val, Secretary of State for Pope St. Pius X, wrote in 1906:

> I should not be at all surprised if, sooner or later, the Holy Father does denounce the modern heresies, which are doing incalculable harm, and utterly destroying the Faith right and left. But I have yet to see how Newman could be dragged into any condemnation, when his works are there with which to answer these people, whom he would have no patience with … They are trying to make out that a great many of their doctrines can be classed as Newman's doctrine. It is a libel, and they are trying to get behind a great name to avoid censure. In France, there is already a group who call themselves 'Newmanistes' … I saw the quotation in *The Times* [of London] from John Henry Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, artfully confusing subjective and conscientious conviction with objective truth …

(Buehrle, Marie Cecilia Buehrle, *Rafael, Cardinal Merry del Val*: Sands & Co Publishers Ltd. 15 King St, Covent Garden, London WC2, 1957, 126–127)

16. **Karl Adam**: *The Spirit of Catholicism*, translated by Justin McCann, rev. ed., Garden City, NY: Doubleday Image, 1954 [orig. 1924],1–3, 140–141:

Regarded from the outside Catholicism has the appearance of a confused mass of conflicting forces, of an unnatural synthesis, of a mixture of foreign, nay contradictory, elements … The student of comparative religion … supposes that he must at the outset discard the notion of an organic development of a primitive Christianity which was planted by Christ Himself, and must regard Catholicism as the coalescence of evangelical and nonevangelical elements, of Jewish and heathen and primitive constituents, as a vast syncretism …

Catholicism cannot be identified simply and wholly with primitive Christianity … There is no mechanical identity, but an organic identity … Catholicism is a union of contraries. But contraries are not contradictories. Wherever there is life, there you must have conflict and contrary … For only so is there growth and the continual emergence of new forms … The Gospel of Christ would have been no living Gospel … if it

had remained ever the tiny seed of A.D. 33 … and had not assimilated foreign matter, and had not … grown up into a tree, so that the birds of the air dwell in its branches.

There is no revealed doctrine (dogma explicitum) proclaimed by the Church which is not contained in its exact substance (formaliter) in the sources of revelation, that is, in Scripture and Tradition. But it is not always expressly (explicite) revealed in its specific content, and is often contained so to say wrapped up (implicite) in other truths. As the history of dogma shows, it sometimes needed a long process to free such truths from their wrappings and to make them plain and visible. More than six centuries passed before the Church set forth the central Christian dogma of Jesus, God and Man, in all its aspects and formulated it exhaustively …

The legacy of the faith as left us in the revelation has not been transmitted to us in the form of a clear logical system, but is wrapped up rather in the forms of its time; nor was it always so lucidly and plainly set forth in those forms, that its inner content and irresistible external proof were immediately obvious.

17. **Pope Pius XI** (r. 1922–1939)

For the magisterium of the Church … has also the duty—whenever it is necessary to oppose an efficacious resistance to the errors and attacks of the heretics, or to explain more clearly or in greater detail some points of the sacred doctrine …—to proceed by solemn ceremonies and decrees to timely definitions. By this extraordinary use of the magisterium nothing, of course, is introduced nor is anything added to the sum of those truths which are contained, at least implicitly, in the deposit of Revelation divinely committed to the Church. But those truths are proclaimed which up to this time could have seemed obscure to certain minds, or the status de fide is proclaimed for a point which may have been controversial for other minds.

(Encyclical *Mortalium animos*, January 6, 1928; in. O'Gorman, *ibid.*, 457–458)

18. **Pope Pius XII** (r. 1939–1958)

… theologians must always return to the sources of divine revelation: for it belongs to them to point out how the doctrine of the living Teaching Authority is to be found either explicitly or implicitly in the Scriptures and in Tradition. Besides, each source of divinely revealed doctrine contains so many rich treasures of truth, that they can really never be exhausted. Hence it is that theology through the study of its sacred sources remains ever fresh … together with the sources of positive theology God has given to His Church a living Teaching Authority to elucidate and explain what is contained in the deposit of faith only obscurely and implicitly. This deposit of faith our Divine Redeemer has given for authentic interpretation not to each of the faithful, not even to theologians, but only to the Teaching Authority of the Church.

(Encyclical *Humani Generis*, August 12, 1950; in O'Gorman, *ibid.*, 659)

… the Universal Church, within which dwells the Spirit of Truth who infallibly directs it towards an ever more perfect knowledge of the revealed truths …

(Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* [where the Assumption of Mary was defined ex cathedra], November 1, 1950; in O'Gorman, *ibid.*, 318)

19. **Ludwig Ott**: *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, ed. James Canon Bastible, tr. Patrick Lynch, Rockford, IL: TAN Books and Publishers, 1974, from Fourth English ed., 1960 [orig. 1952 in German], 6–7:

1. Heretical Notion of Dogmatic Development

The Liberal Protestant concept of dogma (cf. A. von Harnack) as well as Modernism (cf. A. Loisy) assumes a substantial development of dogmas, so that the content of a dogma changes radically in the course of time … In this view there are no fixed and constant dogmas; their concept is always developing. The Vatican Council [I] condemned Anton Gunther's (+ 1863) application of the idea of development in this sense to dogmas as heretical: …

> If anybody says that by reason of the progress of science, a meaning must be given to dogmas of the Church other than that which the

Church understood and understands them to have let him be anathema.

In the Encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950), Pope Pius XII rejected that dogmatic relativism, which would demand that dogma should be expressed in the concepts of the philosophy ruling at any particular time … "This conception," he says, "makes dogma a reed, which is driven hither and thither by the wind" …

2. Development of Dogmas in the Catholic Sense

… As to the Formal side of dogma, that is, in the knowledge and in the ecclesiastical proposal of Revealed truth … there is a progress … which occurs in the following fashion:

1) Truths which formerly were only implicitly believed are expressly proposed for belief … to those who lived in later times some were known explicitly, which were not known explicitly by those who lived before them.

2) Material Dogmas are raised to the status of Formal Dogmas.

3) To facilitate general understanding, and to avoid misunderstandings and distortions, the ancient truths which were always believed, e.g., the Hypostatic Union (*unio hypostatica*), Transubstantiation, etc. are formulated in new, sharply defined concepts.

4) Questions formerly disputed are explained and decided, and heretical propositions are condemned …

Appendix One

John Henry Newman: *The Theory of Developments in Religious Doctrine* (from *Oxford University Sermons*—1843)

A University Sermon Preached on the Purification, 1843.

LUKE 2:19.

"But Mary kept A these things, and pondered them in her heart."

Little is told us in Scripture concerning the Blessed Virgin, but there is one grace of which the Evangelists make her the pattern, in a few simple sentences-of Faith. Zacharias questioned the Angel's message, but "Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." Accordingly Elisabeth, speaking with an apparent allusion to the contrast thus exhibited between her own highly favoured husband, righteous Zacharias, and the still more highly favoured Mary, said, on receiving her salutation, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb; Blessed is she that believed for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."

2. But Mary's faith did not end in a mere acquiescence in Divine providences and revelations: as the text informs us, she "pondered" them. When the shepherds came, and told of the vision of Angels which they had seen at the time of the Nativity, and how one of them announced that the Infant in her arms was "the Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," while others did but wonder, "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." Again, when her Son and Saviour had come to the age of twelve years, and had left her for awhile for His Father's service, and had been found, to her surprise, in the Temple, amid the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions, and had, on her addressing Him, vouchsafed to justify His conduct, we are told, "His mother kept all these sayings in her heart." And accordingly, at the marriage-feast in Cana, her faith anticipated His first miracle, and she said to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

3. Thus St. Mary is our pattern of Faith, both in the reception and in the study of Divine Truth. She does not think it enough to accept, she dwells upon it; not enough to possess, she uses it; not enough to assent, she developes it; not enough to submit the Reason, she reasons upon it; not indeed reasoning first, and believing afterwards, with Zacharias, yet first believing without reasoning, next from love and reverence, reasoning after believing. And thus she symbolizes to us, not only the faith of the unlearned, but of the doctors of the Church also, who have to investigate, and weigh, and define, as well as to profess the Gospel; to draw the line between truth and heresy; to anticipate or remedy the various aberrations

of wrong reason; to combat pride and recklessness with their own arms; and thus to triumph over the sophist and the innovator.

4. If, then, on a Day dedicated to such high contemplations as the Feast which we are now celebrating, it is allowable to occupy the thoughts with a subject not of a devotional or practical nature, it will be some relief of the omission to select one in which St. Mary at least will be our example,—the use of Reason in investigating the doctrines of Faith; a subject, indeed, far fitter for a volume than for the most extended notice which can here be given to it; but one which cannot be passed over altogether in silence, in any attempt at determining the relation of Faith to Reason.

5. The overthrow of the wisdom of the world was one of the earliest, is well as the noblest of the triumphs of the Church; after the pattern of her Divine Master, who took His place among the doctors before He preached His new Kingdom, or opposed Himself to the world's power. St. Paul, the learned Pharisee, was the first fruits of that gifted company, in whom the pride of science is seen prostrated before the foolishness of preaching. From his day to this the Cross has enlisted under its banner all those great endowments of mind, which in former times had been expended on vanities, or dissipated in doubt and speculation. Nor was it long before the schools of heathenism took the alarm, and manifested an unavailing jealousy of the new doctrine, which was robbing them of their most hopeful disciples. They had hitherto taken for granted that the natural home of the Intellect was the Garden or the Porch; and it reversed their very first principles to be called on to confess, what yet they could not deny, that a Superstition, as they considered it, was attracting to itself all the energy, the keenness, the originality, and the eloquence of the age. But these aggressions upon heathenism were only the beginning of the Church's conquests; in the course of time the whole mind of the world, as I may say, was absorbed into the philosophy of the Cross, as the element in which it lived, and the form upon which it was moulded. And how many centuries did this endure, and what vast ruins still remain of its dominion! In the capitals of Christendom the high cathedral and the perpetual choir still witness to the victory of Faith over the world's power. To see its triumph over the world's wisdom, we must enter those solemn cemeteries in which are stored the relics and the monuments of ancient Faith-our libraries.

Look along their shelves, and every name you read there is, in one sense or other, a trophy set up in record of the victories of Faith. How many long lives, what high aims, what single-minded devotion, what intense contemplation, what fervent prayer, what deep erudition, what untiring diligence, what toilsome conflicts has it taken to establish its supremacy! This has been the object which has given meaning to the life of Saints, and which is the subject-matter of their history. For this they have given up the comforts of earth and the charities of home, and surrendered themselves to an austere rule, nay, even to confessorship and persecution, if so be they could make some small offering, or do some casual service, or provide some additional safeguard towards the great work which was in progress. This has been the origin of controversies, long and various, yes, and the occasion of much infirmity, the test of much hidden perverseness, and the subject of much bitterness and tumult. The world has been moved in consequence of it, populations excited, leagues and alliances formed, kingdoms lost and won: and even zeal, when excessive, evinced a sense of its preciousness; nay, even rebellions in some sort did homage to it, as insurgents imply the actual sovereignty of the power which they are assailing. Meanwhile the work went on, and at length a large fabric of divinity was reared, irregular in its structure, and diverse in its style, as beseemed the slow growth of centuries; nay, anomalous in its details, from the peculiarities of individuals, or the interference of strangers, but still, on the whole, the development of an idea, and like itself, and unlike anything else, its most widely-separated parts having relations with each other, and betokening a common origin.

6. Let us quit this survey of the general system, and descend to the history of the formation of any Catholic dogma. What a remarkable sight it is, as almost all unprejudiced persons will admit, to trace the course of the controversy, from its first disorders to its exact and determinate issue. Full of deep interest, to see how the great idea takes hold of a thousand minds by its living force, and will not be ruled or stinted, but is "like a burning fire," as the Prophet speaks, "shut up" within them, till they are "weary of forbearing, and cannot stay," and grows in them, and at length is born through them, perhaps in a long course of years, and even successive generations; so that the doctrine may rather be said to use the minds of

Christians, than to be used by them. Wonderful it is to see with what effort, hesitation, suspense, interruption,—with how many swayings to the right and to the left-with how many reverses, yet with what certainty of advance, with what precision in its march, and with what ultimate completeness, it has been evolved; till the whole truth "self-balanced on its centre hung," part answering to part, one, absolute, integral, indissoluable, while the world lasts! Wonderful, to see how heresy has but thrown that idea into fresh forms, and drawn out from if farther developments, with an exuberance which exceeded all questioning, and a harmony which baffled all criticism, like Him, its Divine Author, who, when put on trial by the Evil One, was but fortified by the assault, and is ever justified in His sayings, and overcomes when He is judged.

7. And this world of thought is the expansion of a few words, uttered, as if casually, by the fishermen of Galilee. Here is another topic which belongs more especially to that part of the subject to which I propose to confine myself. Reason has not only submitted, it has ministered to Faith; it has illustrated its documents; it has raised illiterate peasants into philosophers and divines; it has elicited a meaning from their words which their immediate hearers little suspected. Stranger surely is it that St. John should be a theologian, than that St. Peter should be a prince. This is a phenomenon proper to the Gospel, and a note of divinity. Its half sentences, its overflowings of language, admit of development [Vide Butler's Analogy, part ii. ch. iii.]; they have a life in them which shows itself in progress; a truth, which has the token of consistency; a reality, which is fruitful in resources; a depth, which extends into mystery: for they are representations of what is actual, and has a definite location and necessary bearings and a meaning in the great system of things, and a harmony in what it is, and a compatibility in what it involves. What form of Paganism can furnish a parallel? What philosopher has left his words to posterity as a talent which could be put to usury, as a mine which could be wrought? Here, too, is the badge of heresy; its dogmas are unfruitful; it has no theology; so far forth as it is heresy, it has none. Deduct its remnant of Catholic theology, and what remains? Polemics, explanations, protests. It turns to Biblical Criticism, or to the Evidences of Religion, for want of a province. Its formulae end in themselves, without development, because

they are words; they are barren, because they are dead. If they had life, they would increase and multiply; or, if they do live and bear fruit, it is but as "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." It developes into dissolution; but it creates nothing, it tends to no system, its resultant dogma is but the denial of all dogmas, any theology, under the Gospel. No wonder it denies what it cannot attain.

8. Heresy denies to the Church what is wanting in itself. Here, then, we are brought to the subject to which I wish to give attention. It need not surely formally be proved that this disparagement of doctrinal statements, and in particular of those relating to the Holy Trinity and Incarnation, is especially prevalent in our times. There is a suspicion widely abroad,—felt, too, perhaps, by many who are unwilling to confess it,—that the development of ideas and formation of dogmas is a mere abuse of Reason, which, when it attempted such sacred subjects, went beyond its powers, and could do nothing more than multiply words without meaning, and deductions which come to nothing. The conclusion follows, that such an attempt does but lead to mischievous controversy, from that discordance of doctrinal opinions, which is its immediate consequence; that there is, in truth, no necessary or proper connexion between inward religious belief and scientific expositions; and that charity, as well as good sense, is best consulted by reducing creeds to the number of private opinions, which, if individuals will hold for themselves, at least they have no right to impose upon others.

9. It is my purpose, then, in what follows, to investigate the connexion between Faith and Dogmatic Confession, as far as relates to the sacred doctrines which were just now mentioned, and to show the office of the Reason in reference to it; and, in doing so, I shall make as little allusion as may be to erroneous views on the subject, which have been mentioned only for the sake of perspicuity; following rather the course which the discussion may take, and pursuing those issues on which it naturally opens. Nor am I here in any way concerned with the question, who is the legitimate framer and judge of these dogmatic inferences under the Gospel, or if there be any. Whether the Church is infallible, or the individual, or the first ages, or none of these, is not the point here, but the theory of developments itself.

10. Theological dogmas are propositions expressive of the judgments which the mind forms, or the impressions which it receives, of Revealed Truth. Revelation sets before it certain supernatural facts and actions, beings and principles; these make a certain impression or image upon it; and this impression spontaneously, or even necessarily, becomes the subject of reflection on the part of the mind itself, which proceeds to investigate it, and to draw it forth in successive and distinct sentences. Thus the Catholic doctrine of Original Sin, or of Sin after Baptism, or of the Eucharist, or of justification, is but the expression of the inward belief of Catholics on these several points, formed upon an analysis of that belief1*. Such, too, are the high doctrines with which I am especially concerned.

11. Now, here I observe, first of all, that, naturally as the inward idea of divine truth, such as has been described, passes into explicit form by the activity of our reflective powers, still such an actual delineation is not essential to its genuineness and perfection. A peasant may have such a true impression, yet be unable to give any intelligible account of it, as will easily be understood. But what is remarkable at first sight is this, that there is good reason for saying that the impression made upon the mind need not even be recognized by the parties possessing it. It is no proof that persons are not possessed, because they are not conscious, of an idea. Nothing is of more frequent occurrence, whether in things sensible or intellectual, than the existence of such unperceived impressions. What do we mean when we say, that certain persons do not know themselves, but that they are ruled by views, feelings, prejudices, objects which they do not recognize? How common is it to be exhilarated or depressed, we do not recollect why, though we are aware that something has been told us, or has happened, good or bad, which accounts for our feeling, could we recall it! What is memory itself, but a vast magazine of such dormant, but present and excitable ideas? Or consider, when persons would trace the history of their own opinions in past years, how baffled they are in the attempt to fix the date of this or that conviction, their system of thought having been all the while in continual, gradual, tranquil expansion; so that it were as easy to follow the growth of the fruit of the earth, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," as to chronicle changes, which involved no abrupt revolution, or reaction, or fickleness of mind, but have been the

birth of an idea, the development, in explicit form, of what was already latent within it. Or, again, critical disquisitions are often written about the idea which this or that poet might have in his mind in certain of his compositions and characters; and we call such analysis the philosophy of poetry, not implying thereby of necessity that the author wrote upon a theory in his actual delineation, or knew what he was doing; but that, in matter of fact, he was possessed, ruled, guided by an unconscious idea. Moreover, it is a question whether that strange and painful feeling of unreality, which religious men experience from time to time, when nothing seems true, or good, or right, or profitable, when Faith seems a name, and duty a mockery, and all endeavours to do right, absurd and hopeless, and all things forlorn and dreary, as if religion were wiped out from the world, may not be the direct effect of the temporary obscuration of some master vision, which unconsciously supplies the mind with spiritual life and peace.

12. Or, to take another class of instances which are to the point so far as this, that at least they are real impressions, even though they be not influential. How common is what is called vacant vision, when objects meet the eye, without any effort of the judgment to measure or locate them; and that absence of mind, which recollects minutes afterwards the occurrence of some sound, the striking of the hour, or the question of a companion, which passed unheeded at the time it took place! How, again, happens it in dreams, that we suddenly pass from one state of feeling, or one assemblage of circumstances to another, without any surprise at the incongruity, except that, while we are impressed first in this way, then in that, we take no active cognizance of the impression? And this, perhaps, is the life of inferior animals, a sort of continuous dream, impressions without reflections; such, too, seems to be the first life of infants; nay, in heaven itself, such may be the high existence of some exalted orders of blessed spirits, as the Seraphim, who are said to be, not Knowledge, but all Love.

13. Now, it is important to insist on this circumstance, because it suggests the reality and permanence of inward knowledge, as distinct from explicit confession. The absence, or partial absence, or incompleteness of dogmatic statements is no proof of the absence of impressions or implicit judgments, in the mind of the Church. Even centuries might pass without the formal

expression of a truth, which had been all along the secret life of millions of faithful souls. Thus, not till the thirteenth century was there any direct and distinct avowal, on the part of the Church, of the numerical Unity of the Divine Nature, which the language of some of the principal Greek fathers, prima facie, though not really, denies. Again, the doctrine of the Double Procession was no Catholic dogma in the first ages, though it was more or less clearly stated by individual Fathers; yet, if it is now to be received, as surely it must be, as part of the Creed, it was really held every where from the beginning, and therefore, in a measure, held as a mere religious impression, and perhaps an unconscious one.

14. But, further, if the ideas may be latent in the Christian mind, by which it is animated and formed, it is less wonderful that they should be difficult to elicit and define; and of this difficulty we have abundant proof in the history whether of the Church, or of individuals. Surely it is not at all wonderful, that, when individuals attempt to analyze their own belief, they should find the task arduous in the extreme, if not altogether beyond them; or, again, a work of many years; or, again, that they should shrink from the true developments, if offered to them, as foreign to their thoughts. This may be illustrated in a variety of ways.

15. It will often happen, perhaps from the nature of things, that it is impossible to master and express an idea in a short space of time. As to individuals, sometimes they find they cannot do so at all; at length, perhaps, they recognize, in some writer they meet, with the very account of their own thoughts, which they desiderate; and then they say, that "here is what they have felt all along, and wanted to say, but could not," or "what they have ever maintained, only better expressed." Again, how many men are burdened with an idea, which haunts them through a great part of their lives, and of which only at length, with much trouble, do they dispossess themselves? I suppose most of us have felt at times the irritation, and that for a long period, of thoughts and views which we felt, and felt to be true, only dimly showing themselves, or flitting before us; which at length we understood must not be forced, but must have their way, and would, if it were so ordered, come to light in their own time. The life of some men, and those not the least eminent among divines and philosophers, has centred in the development of one idea; nay, perhaps has

been too short for the process. Again, how frequently it happens, that, on first hearing a doctrine propounded, a man hesitates, first acknowledges, then disowns it; then says that he has always held it, but finds fault with the mode in which it is presented to him, accusing it of paradox or over-refinement; that is, he cannot at the moment analyze his own opinions, and does not know whether he holds the doctrine or not, from the difficulty of mastering his thoughts.

16. Another characteristic, as I have said, of dogmatic statements, is the difficulty of recognizing them, even when attained, as the true representation of our meaning. This happens for many reasons; sometimes, from the faint hold we have of the impression itself, whether its nature be good or bad, so that we shrink from principles in substance, which we acknowledge in influence. Many a man, for instance, is acting on utilitarian principles, who is shocked at them in set treatises, and disowns them. Again, in sacred subjects, the very circumstance that a dogma professes to be a direct contemplation, and, if so be, a definition of what is infinite and eternal, is painful to serious minds. Moreover, from the hypothesis, it is the representation of an idea in a medium not native to it, not as originally conceived, but, as it were, in projection; no wonder, then, that, though there be an intimate correspondence, part by part, between the impression and the dogma, yet there should be an harshness in the outline of the latter; as, for instance, a want of harmonious proportion; and yet this is unavoidable, from the infirmities of our intellectual powers.

17. Again, another similar peculiarity in developments in general, is the great remoteness of the separate results of a common idea, or rather at first sight the absence of any connexion. Thus it often happens that party spirit is imputed to persons, merely because they agree with one another in certain points of opinion and conduct, which are thought too minute, distant, and various, in the large field of religious doctrine and discipline, to proceed from any but an external influence and a positive rule; whereas an insight into the wonderfully expansive power and penetrating virtue of theological or philosophical ideas would have shown, that what is apparently arbitrary in rival or kindred schools of thought, is after all rigidly determined by the original hypothesis. The remark has been made, for instance, that rarely have persons maintained the sleep of the soul

before the Resurrection, without falling into more grievous errors; again, those who deny the Lutheran doctrine of justification, commonly have tendencies towards a ceremonial religion; again, it is a serious fact that Protestantism has at various times unexpectedly developed into an allowance or vindication of polygamy; and heretics in general, however opposed in tenets, are found to have an inexplicable sympathy for each other, and never wake up from their ordinary torpor, but to exchange courtesies and meditate coalitions. One other remark is in point here, and relates to the length to which statements run, though, before we attempted them, we fancied our idea could be expressed in one or two sentences. Explanations grow under our hands, in spite of our effort at compression. Such, too, is the contrast between conversation and epistolary correspondence. We speak our meaning with little trouble; our voice, manner, and half words completing it for us; but in writing, when details must be drawn out, and misapprehensions anticipated, we seem never to be rid of the responsibility of our task. This being the case, it is surprising that the Creeds are so short, nor surprising that they need a comment.

18. The difficulty, then, and hazard of developing doctrines implicitly received, must be fully allowed; and this is often made a ground for inferring that they have no proper developments at all; that there is no natural connexion between certain dogmas and certain impressions; and that theological science is a matter of time, and place, and accident, though inward belief is ever and every where one and the same. But surely the instinct of every Christian revolts from such a position; for the very first impulse of his faith is to try to express itself about the "great sight" which is vouchsafed to it; and this seems to argue that a science there is, whether the mind is equal to its discovery or no. And, indeed, what science is open to every chance inquirer? which is not recondite in its principles? which requires not special gifts of mind for its just formation? All subject-matters admit of true theories and false, and the false are no prejudice to the true. Why should this class of ideas be different from all other? Principles of philosophy, physics, ethics, politics, taste, admit both of implicit reception and explicit statement; why should not the ideas, which are the secret life of the Christian, be recognized also as fixed and definite in themselves, and as capable of scientific analysis? Why should not there be that real

connexion between science and its subject-matter in religion, which exists in other departments of thought? No one would deny that the philosophy of Zeno or Pythagoras was the exponent of a certain mode of viewing things; or would affirm that Platonist and Epicurean acted on one and the same idea of nature, life, and duty, and meant the same thing, though they verbally differed, merely because a Plato or an Epicurus was needed to detect the abstruse elements of thought, out of which each philosophy was eventually constructed. A man surely may be a Peripatetic or an Academic in his feelings, views, aims, and acts, who never heard the names. Granting, then, extreme cases, when individuals who would analyze their views of religion are thrown entirely upon their own reason, and find that reason unequal to the task, this will be no argument against a general, natural, and ordinary correspondence between the dogma and the inward idea. Surely, if Almighty God is ever one and the same, and is revealed to us as one and the same, the true inward impression of Him, made on the recipient of the revelation, must be one and the same; and, since human nature proceeds upon fixed laws, the statement of that impression must be one and the same, so that we may as well say that there are two Gods as two Creeds. And considering the strong feelings and energetic acts and severe sufferings which age after age have been involved in the maintenance of the Catholic dogmas, it is surely a very shallow philosophy to account such maintenance a mere contest about words, and a very abject philosophy to attribute it to mere party spirit, or to personal rivalry, or to ambition, or to covetousness.

19. Reasonable, however, as is this view of doctrinal developments in general, it cannot be denied that those which relate to the Objects of Faith, of which I am particularly speaking, have a character of their own, and must be considered separately. Let us, then, consider how the case stands, as regards the sacred doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation.

20. The Apostle said to the Athenians, "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you;" and the mind which is habituated to the thought of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, naturally turns, as I have said, with a devout curiosity to the contemplation of the Object of its adoration, and begins to form statements concerning Him before it knows whither, or how far, it will be carried. One proposition necessarily leads to another,

and a second to a third; then some limitation is required; and the combination of these opposites occasions some fresh evolutions from the original idea, which indeed can never be said to be entirely exhausted. This process is its development, and results in a series, or rather body of dogmatic statements, till what was at first an impression on the Imagination has become a system or creed in the Reason.

21. Now such impressions are obviously individual and complete above other theological ideas, because they are the impressions of Objects. Ideas and their developments are commonly not identical, the development being but the carrying out of the idea into its consequences. Thus the doctrine of Penance may be called a development of' the doctrine of Baptism, yet still is a distinct doctrine; whereas the developments in the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation are mere portions of the original impression, and modes of representing it. As God is one, so the impression which He gives us of Himself is one; it is not a thing of parts; it is not a system; nor is it any thing imperfect, and needing a counterpart. It is the vision of an object. When we pray, we pray, not to an assemblage of notions, or to a creed, but to One Individual Being; and when we speak of Him we speak of a Person, not of a Law or a Manifestation. This being the case, all our attempts to delineate our impression of Him go to bring out one idea, not two or three or four; not a philosophy, but an individual idea in its separate aspects.

22. This may be fitly compared to the impressions made on us through the senses. Material objects are whole, and individual; and the impressions which they make on the mind, by means of the senses, are of a corresponding nature, complex and manifold in their relations and bearings, but considered in themselves integral and one. And in like manner the ideas which we are granted of Divine Objects under the Gospel, from the nature of the case and because they are ideas, answer to the Originals so far as this, that they are whole, indivisible, substantial, and may be called real, as being images of what is real. Objects which are conveyed to us through the senses, stand out in our minds, as I may say, with dimensions and aspects and influences various, and all of these consistent with one another, and many of them beyond our memory or even knowledge, while we contemplate the objects themselves; thus forcing

on us a persuasion of their reality from the spontaneous congruity and coincidence of these accompaniments, as if they could not be creations of our minds, but were the images of external and independent beings. This of course will take place in the case of the sacred ideas which are the objects of our faith. Religious men, according to their measure, have an idea or vision of the Blessed Trinity in Unity, of the Son Incarnate and of His Presence, not as a number of qualities, attributes, and actions, not as the subject of a number of propositions, but as one, and individual, and independent of words, as an impression conveyed through the senses.

23. Particular propositions, then, which are used to express portions of the great idea vouchsafed to us, can never really be confused with the idea itself, which all such propositions taken together can but reach, and cannot exceed. As definitions are not intended to go beyond their subject, but to be adequate to it, so the dogmatic statements of the Divine Nature used in our confessions, however multiplied, cannot say more than is implied in the original idea, considered in its completeness, without the risk of heresy. Creeds and dogmas live in the one idea which they are designed to express, and which alone is substantive; and are necessary only because the human mind cannot reflect upon that idea, except piecemeal, cannot use it in its oneness and entireness, nor without resolving it into a series of aspects and relations. And in matter of fact these expressions are never equivalent to it; we are able, indeed, to define the creations of our own minds, for they are what we make them and nothing else; but it were as easy to create what is real as to define it; and thus the Catholic dogmas are, after all, but symbols of a Divine fact, which, far from being compassed by those very propositions, would not be exhausted, nor fathomed, by a thousand.

24. Now of such sacred ideas and their attendant expressions, I observe:—(1.) First, that an impression of this intimate kind seems to be what Scripture means by "knowledge." "This is life eternal," says our Saviour, "that they might know Thee the only True God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." In like manner St. Paul speaks of willingly losing all things, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus;" and St. Peter of "the knowledge of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue." [John 17:3. Phil. 3:8. 2 Pet. 1:3.] Knowledge is the possession of those living ideas of sacred things, from which alone change of heart or conduct can proceed. This

awful vision is what Scripture seems to designate by the phrases "Christ in us," "Christ dwelling in us by faith," "Christ formed in us," and "Christ manifesting Himself unto us." And though it is faint and doubtful in some minds, and distinct in others, as some remote object in the twilight or in the day, this arises from the circumstances of the particular mind, and does not interfere with the perfection of the gift itself.

25. (2.) This leads me next, however, to observe, that these religious impressions differ from those of material objects, in the mode in which they are made. The senses are direct, immediate, and ordinary informants, and act spontaneously without any will or effort on our part; but no such faculties have been given us, as far as we know, for realizing the Objects of Faith. It is true that inspiration may be a gift of this kind to those who have been favoured with it; nor would it be safe to deny to the illuminating grace of Baptism a power, at least of putting the mind into a capacity for receiving impressions; but the former of these is not ordinary, and both are supernatural. The secondary and intelligible means by which we receive the impression of Divine Verities, are, for instance, the habitual and devout perusal of Scripture, which gradually acts upon the mind; again, the gradual influence of intercourse with those who are in themselves in possession of the sacred ideas; again, the study of Dogmatic Theology, which is our present subject; again, a continual round of devotion; or again, sometimes, in minds both fitly disposed and apprehensive, the almost instantaneous operation of a keen faith. This obvious distinction follows between sensible and religious ideas, that we put the latter into language in order to fix, teach, and transmit them, but not the former. No one defines a material object by way of conveying to us what we know so much better by the senses, but we form creeds as a chief mode of perpetuating the impression.

26. (3.) Further, I observe, that though the Christian mind reasons out a series of dogmatic statements, one from another, this it has ever done, and always must do, not from those statements taken in themselves, as logical propositions, but as being itself enlightened and (as if) inhabited by that sacred impression which is prior to them, which acts as a regulating principle, ever present, upon the reasoning, and without which no one has any warrant to reason at all. Such sentences as "the Word was God," or "the

Only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father," or "the Word was made flesh," or "the Holy Ghost which proceedeth from the Father," are not a mere letter which we may handle by the rules of art at our own will, but august tokens of most simple, ineffable, adorable facts, embraced, enshrined according to its measure in the believing mind. For though the development of an idea is a deduction of proposition from proposition, these propositions are ever formed in and round the idea itself (so to speak), and are in fact one and all only aspects of it. Moreover, this will account both for the mode of arguing from particular texts or single words of Scripture, practised by the early Fathers, and for their fearless decision in practising it; for the great Object of Faith on which they lived both enabled them to appropriate to itself particular passages of Scripture, and became to them a safeguard against heretical deductions from them. Also, it will account for the charge of weak reasoning, commonly brought against those Fathers; for never do we seem so illogical to others as when we are arguing under the continual influence of impressions to which they are insensible.

27. (4.) Again, it must of course be remembered, as I have just implied, (though as being an historical matter it hardly concerns us here), that Revelation itself has provided in Scripture the main outlines and also large details of the dogmatic system. Inspiration has superseded the exercise of human Reason in great measure, and left it but the comparatively easy task of finishing the sacred work. The question, indeed, at first sight occurs, why such inspired statements are not enough without further developments; but in truth, when Reason has once been put on the investigation, it cannot stop till it has finished it; one dogma creates another, by the same right by which it was itself created; the Scripture statements are sanctions as well as informants in the inquiry; they begin and they do not exhaust.

28. (5.) Scripture, I say, begins a series of developments which it does not finish; that is to say, in other words, it is a mistake to look for every separate proposition of the Catholic doctrine in Scripture. This is plain from what has gone before. For instance, the Athanasian Creed professes to lay down the right faith, which we must hold on its most sacred subjects, in order to be saved. This must mean that there is one view concerning the Holy Trinity, or concerning the Incarnation, which is true, and distinct

from all others; one definite, consistent, entire view, which cannot be mistaken, not contained in any certain number of propositions, but held as a view by the believing mind, and not held, but denied by Arians, Sabellians, Tritheists, Nestorians, Monophysites, Socinians, and other heretics. That idea is not enlarged, if propositions are added, nor impaired if they are withdrawn: if they are added, this is with a view of conveying that one integral view, not of amplifying it. That view does not depend on such propositions: it does not consist in them; they are but specimens and indications of it. And they may be multiplied without limit. They are necessary, but not needful to it, being but portions or aspects of that previous impression which has at length come under the cognizance of Reason and the terminology of science. The question, then, is not whether this or that proposition of the Catholic doctrine is in terminis in Scripture, unless we would be slaves to the letter, but whether that one view of the Mystery, of which all such are the exponents, be not there; a view which would be some other view, and not itself, if any one of such propositions, if any one of a number of similar propositions, were not true. Those propositions imply each other, as being parts of one whole; so that to deny one is to deny all, and to invalidate one is to deface and destroy the view itself. One thing alone has to be impressed on us by Scripture, the Catholic idea, and in it they all are included. To object, then, to the number of propositions, upon which an anathema is placed, is altogether to mistake their use; for their multiplication is not intended to enforce many things, but to express one,—to form within us that one impression concerning Almighty God, as the ruling principle of our minds, and that, whether we can fully recognize our own possession of it or no. And surely it is no paradox to say that such ruling ideas may exert a most powerful influence, at least in their various aspects, on our moral character, and on the whole man: as no one would deny in the case of belief or disbelief of a Supreme Being.

29. (6.) And here we see the ordinary mistake of doctrinal innovators, viz. to go away with this or that proposition of the Creed, instead of embracing that one idea which all of them together are meant to convey; it being almost a definition of heresy, that it fastens on some one statement as if the whole truth, to the denial of all others, and as the basis of a new faith;

erring rather in what it rejects, than in what it maintains: though, in truth, if the mind deliberately rejects any portion of the doctrine, this is a proof that it does not really hold even that very statement for the sake of which it rejects the others. Realizing is the very life of true developments; it is peculiar to the Church, and the justification of her definitions.

30. Enough has now been said on the distinction, yet connexion, between the implicit knowledge and the explicit confession of the Divine Objects of Faith, as they are revealed to us under the Gospel. An objection, however, remains, which cannot be satisfactorily treated in a few words. And what is worse than prolixity, the discussion may bear with it some appearance of unnecessary or even wanton refinement; unless, indeed, it is thrown into the form of controversy, a worse evil. Let it suffice to say, that my wish is, not to discover difficulties in any subject, but to solve them.

31. It may be asked, then, whether the mistake of words and names for things is not incurred by orthodox as well as heretics, in dogmatizing at all about the "secret things which belong unto the Lord our God," inasmuch as the idea of a supernatural object must itself be supernatural, and since no such ideas are claimed by ordinary Christians, no knowledge of Divine Verities is possible to them. How should any thing of this world convey ideas which are beyond and above this world? How can teaching and intercourse, how can human words, how can earthly images, convey to the mind an idea of the Invisible? They cannot rise above themselves. They can suggest no idea but what is resolvable into ideas natural and earthly. The words "Person," "Substance … Consubstantial," "Generation," "Procession," "Incarnation," "Taking of the manhood into God," and the like, have either a very abject and human meaning, or none at all. In other words, there is no such inward view of these doctrines, distinct from the dogmatic language used to express them, as was just now supposed. The metaphors by which they are signified are not mere symbols of ideas which exist independently of them, but their meaning is coincident and identical with the ideas. When, indeed, we have knowledge of a thing from other sources, then the metaphors we may apply to it are but accidental appendages to that knowledge; whereas our ideas of Divine things are just coextensive with the figures by which we express them, neither more nor less, and without them are not; and when we draw inferences from those figures, we

are not illustrating one existing idea, but drawing mere logical inferences. We speak, indeed, of material objects freely, because our senses reveal them to us apart from our words; but as to these ideas about heavenly things, we learn them from words, yet (it seems) we are to say what we, without words, conceive of them, as if words could convey what they do not contain. It follows that our anathemas, our controversies, our struggles, our sufferings, are merely about the poor ideas conveyed to us in certain figures of speech.

32. Some obvious remarks suggest themselves in answer to this representation. First, it is difficult to determine what divine grace may not do for us, if not in immediately implanting new ideas, yet in refining and elevating those which we gain through natural informants. If, as we all acknowledge, grace renews our moral feelings, yet through outward means, if it opens upon us new ideas about virtue and goodness and heroism and heavenly peace, it does not appear why, in a certain sense, it may not impart ideas concerning the nature of God. Again, the various terms and figures which are used in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity or of the Incarnation, surely may by their combination create ideas which will be altogether new, though they are still of an earthly character. And further, when it is said that such figures convey no knowledge of the Divine Nature itself, beyond those figures, whatever they are, it should be considered whether our senses can be proved to suggest any real idea of matter. All that we know, strictly speaking, is the existence of the impressions our senses make on us; and yet we scruple not to speak as if they conveyed to us the knowledge of material substances. Let, then, the Catholic dogmas, as such, be freely admitted to convey no true idea of Almighty God, but only an earthly one, gained from earthly figures, provided it be allowed, on the other hand, that the senses do not convey to us any true idea of matter, but only an idea commensurate with sensible impressions.

33. Nor is there any reason why this should not be fully granted. Still there may be a certain correspondence between the idea, though earthly, and its heavenly archetype, such, that that idea belongs to the archetype, in a sense in which no other earthly idea belongs to it, as being the nearest approach to it which our present state allows. Indeed Scripture itself intimates the earthly nature of our present ideas of Sacred Objects, when it speaks of our

now "seeing in a glass darkly, (en ainigmati) but then face to face" and it has ever been the doctrine of divines that the Beatific Vision, or true sight of Almighty God, is reserved for the world to come. Meanwhile we are allowed such an approximation to the truth as earthly images and figures may supply to us.

34. It must not be supposed that this is the only case in which we are obliged to receive information needful to us, through the medium of our existing ideas, and consequently with but a vague apprehension of its subject-matter. Children, who are made our pattern in Scripture, are taught, by an accommodation, on the part of their teachers, to their immature faculties and their scanty vocabulary. To answer their questions in the language which we should use towards grown men, would be simply to mislead them, if they could construe it at all. We must dispense and "divide" the word of truth, if we would not have it changed, as far as they are concerned, into a word of falsehood; for what is short of truth in the letter may be to them the most perfect truth, that is, the nearest approach to truth, compatible with their condition2*. The case is the same as regards those who have any natural defect or deprivation which cuts them off from the circle of ideas common to mankind in general. To speak to a blind man of light and colours, in terms proper to those phenomena, would be to mock him; we must use other media of information accommodated to his circumstances, according to the well-known instance in which his own account of scarlet was to liken it to the sound of a trumpet. And so again, as regards savages, or the ignorant, or weak, or narrow-minded, our representations and arguments must take a certain form, if they are to gain admission into their minds at all, and to reach them. Again, what impediments do the diversities of language place in the way of communicating ideas! Language is a sort of analysis of thought; and, since ideas are infinite, and infinitely combined, and infinitely modified, whereas language is a method definite and limited, and confined to an arbitrary selection of a certain number of these innumerable materials, it were idle to expect that the courses of thought marked out in one language should, except in their great outlines and main centres, correspond to those of another. Multitudes of ideas expressed in the one do not even enter into the other, and can only be conveyed by some economy or accommodation,

by circumlocutions, phrases, limiting words, figures, or some bold and happy expedient. And sometimes, from the continual demand, foreign words become naturalized. Again, the difficulty is extreme, as all persons know, of leading certain individuals (to use a familiar phrase) to understand one another; their habits of thought turning apparently on points of mutual repulsion. Now this is always in a measure traceable to moral diversities between the parties; still, in many cases, it arises mainly from difference in the principle on which they have divided and subdivided that world of ideas, which comes before them both. They seem ever to be dodging each other, and need a common measure or economy to mediate between them.

35. Fables, again, are economies or accommodations, being truths and principles cast into that form in which they will be most vividly recognized; as in the well-known instance attributed to Menenius Agrippa. Again, mythical representations, at least in their better form, may be considered facts or narratives, untrue, but like the truth, intended to bring out the action of some principle, point of character, and the like. For instance, the tradition that St. Ignatius was the child whom our Lord took in His arms, may be unfounded; but it realizes to us his special relation to Christ and His Apostles, with a keenness peculiar to itself. The same remark may be made upon certain narratives of martyrdoms, or of the details of such narratives, or of certain alleged miracles, or heroic acts, or speeches, all which are the spontaneous produce of religious feeling under imperfect knowledge. If the alleged facts did not occur, they ought to have occurred (if I may so speak); they are such as might have occurred, and would have occurred, under circumstances; and they belong to the parties to whom they are attributed, potentially, if not actually; or the like of them did occur; or occurred to others similarly circumstanced, though not to those very persons. Many a theory or view of things, on which an institution is founded, or a party held together, is of the same kind. Many an argument, used by zealous and earnest men, has this economical character, being not the very ground on which they act, (for they continue in the same course, though it be refuted,) yet, in a certain sense, a representation of it, a proximate description of their feelings in the shape of argument, on which they can rest, to which they can recur when

perplexed, and appeal when questioned. Now, in this reference to accommodation or economy in human affairs, I do not meddle with the question of casuistry, viz. which of such artifices, as they may be called, are innocent, or where the line is to be drawn. That some are immoral, common sense tells us; but it is enough for my purpose, if some are necessary, as the same common sense will allow; and then the very necessity of the use will account for the abuse and perversion.

36. Even between man and man, then, constituted, as men are, alike, various distinct instruments, keys, or calculi of thought obtain, on which their ideas and arguments shape themselves respectively, and which we must use, if we would reach them. The cogitative method, as it may be called, of one man is notoriously very different from that of another; of the lawyer from that of the soldier, of the rich from that of the poor. The territory of thought is portioned out in a hundred different ways. Abstractions, generalizations, definitions, propositions, all are framed on distinct standards; and if this is found in matters of this world between man and man, surely much more must it exist between the ideas of men, and the thoughts, ways, and works of God.

37. One of the obvious instances of this contrariety is seen in the classifications we make of the subjects of the animal or vegetable kingdoms. Here a very intelligible order has been observed by the Creator Himself; still one of which we have not, after all, the key. We are obliged to frame one of our own; and when we apply it, we find that it will not exactly answer the Divine idea of arrangement, as it discovers itself to us; there being phenomena which we cannot locate, or which, upon our system of division, are anomalies in the general harmony of the Creation.

38. Mathematical science will afford us a more extended illustration of this distinction between supernatural and eternal laws, and our attempts to represent them, that is, our economies. Various methods or calculi have been adopted to embody those immutable principles and dispositions of which the science treats, which are really independent of any, yet cannot be contemplated or pursued without one or other of them. The first of these instruments of investigation employs the medium of extension; the second, that of number; the third, that of motion; the fourth proceeds on a

more subtle hypothesis, that of increase. These methods are very distinct from each other, at least the geometrical and the differential; yet they are, one and all, analyses, more or less perfect, of those same necessary truths, for which we have not a name, of which we have no idea, except in the terms of such economical representations. They are all developments of one and the same range of ideas; they are all instruments of discovery as to those ideas. They stand for real things, and we can reason with them, though they be but symbols, as if they were the things themselves, for which they stand. Yet none of them carries out the lines of truth to their limits; first, one stops in the analysis, then another; like some calculating tables which answer for a thousand times, and miss in the thousand and first. While they answer, we can use them just as if they were the realities which they represent, and without thinking of those realities; but at length our instrument of discovery issues in some great impossibility or contradiction, or what we call in religion, a mystery. It has run its length; and by its failure shows that all along it has been but an expedient for practical purposes, not a true analysis or adequate image of those recondite laws which are investigated by means of it. It has never fathomed their depth, because it now fails to measure their course. At the same time, no one, because it cannot do every thing, would refuse to use it within the range in which it will act; no one would say that it was a system of empty symbols, though it be but a shadow of the unseen. Though we use it with caution, still we use it, as being the nearest approximation to the truth which our condition admits.

39. Let us take another instance, of an outward and earthly form, or economy, under which great wonders unknown seem to be typified; I mean musical sounds, as they are exhibited most perfectly in instrumental harmony. There are seven notes in the scale; make them fourteen; yet what a slender outfit for so vast an enterprise! What science brings so much out of so little? Out of what poor elements does some great master in it create his new world! Shall we say that all this exuberant inventiveness is a mere ingenuity or trick of art, like some game or fashion of the day, without reality, without meaning? We may do so; and then, perhaps, we shall also account the science of theology to be a matter of words; yet, as there is a divinity in the theology of the Church, which those who feel cannot

communicate, so is there also in the wonderful creation of sublimity and beauty of which I am speaking. To many men the very names which the science employs are utterly incomprehensible. To speak of an idea or a subject seems to be fanciful or trifling, to speak of the views which it opens upon us to be childish extravagance; yet is it possible that that inexhaustible evolution and disposition of notes, so rich yet so simple, so intricate yet so regulated, so various yet so majestic, should be a mere sound, which is gone and perishes? Can it be that those mysterious stirrings of heart, and keen emotions, and strange yearnings after we know not what, and awful impressions from we know not whence, should be wrought in us by what is unsubstantial, and comes and goes, and begins and ends in itself? It is not so; it cannot be. No; they have escaped from some higher sphere; they are the outpourings of eternal harmony in the medium of created sound; they are echoes from our Home; they are the voice of Angels, or the Magnificat of Saints, or the living laws of Divine Governance, or the Divine Attributes; something are they besides themselves, which we cannot compass, which we cannot utter,—though mortal man, and he perhaps not otherwise distinguished above his fellows, has the gift of eliciting them.

40. So much on the subject of musical sound; but what if the whole series of impressions, made on us through the senses, be, as I have already hinted, but a Divine economy suited to our need, and the token of realities distinct from themselves, and such as might be revealed to us, nay, more perfectly, by other senses, different from our existing ones as they from each other? What if the properties of matter, as we conceive of them, are merely relative to us, so that facts and events, which seem impossible when predicated concerning it in terms of those impressions, are impossible only in those terms, not in themselves, impossible only because of the imperfection of the idea, which, in consequence of those impressions, we have conceived of material substances? If so, it would follow that the laws of physics, as we consider them, are themselves but generalizations of economical exhibitions, inferences from figure and shadow, and not more real than the phenomena from which they are drawn. Scripture, for instance, says that the sun moves and the earth is stationary; and science, that the earth moves, and the sun is comparatively at rest. How can we

determine which of these opposite statements is the very truth, till we know what motion is? If our idea of motion be but an accidental result of our present senses, neither proposition is true, and both are true; neither true philosophically, both true for certain practical purposes in the system in which they are respectively found; and physical science will have no better meaning when it says that the earth moves, than plane astronomy when it says that the earth is still.

41. And should any one fear lest thoughts such as these should tend to a dreary and hopeless scepticism, let him take into account the Being and Providence of God, the Merciful and True; and he will at once be relieved of his anxiety. All is dreary till we believe, what our hearts tell us, that we are subjects of His Governance; nothing is dreary, all inspires hope and trust, directly we understand that we are under His hand, and that whatever comes to us is from Him, as a method of discipline and guidance. What is it to us whether the knowledge He gives us be greater or less, if it be He who gives it? What is it to us whether it be exact or vague, if He bids us trust it? What have we to care whether we are or are not given to divide substance from shadow, if He is training us heavenwards by means of either? Why should we vex ourselves to find whether our deductions are philosophical or no, provided they are religious? If our senses supply the media by which we are put on trial, by which we are all brought together, and hold intercourse with each other, and are disciplined and are taught, and enabled to benefit others, it is enough. We have an instinct within us, impelling us, we have external necessity forcing us, to trust our senses, and we may leave the question of their substantial truth for another world, "till the day break, and the shadows flee away."[3]* And what is true of reliance on our senses, is true of all the information which it has pleased God to vouchsafe to us, whether in nature or in grace.

42. Instances, then, such as these, will be found both to sober and to encourage us in our theological studies,—to impress us with a profound sense of our ignorance of Divine Verities, when we know most; yet to hinder us from relinquishing their contemplation, though we know so little. On the one hand, it would appear that even the most subtle questions of the schools may have a real meaning, as the most intricate formuix in analytics; and, since we cannot tell how far our instrument of

thought reaches in the process of investigation, and at what point it fails us, no questions may safely be despised. "Whether God was any where before creation?" "whether He knows all creatures in Himself?" "whether the blessed see all things possible and future in Him?" "whether relation is the form of the Divine Persons?" "in what sense the Holy Spirit is Divine Love?" these, and a multitude of others, far more minute and remote, are all sacred from their subject.

43. On the other hand, it must be recollected that not even the Catholic reasonings and conclusions, as contained in Confessions, and most thoroughly received by us, are worthy of the Divine Verities which they represent, but are the truth only in as full a measure as our minds can admit it; the truth as far as they go, and under the conditions of thought which human feebleness imposes. It is true that God is without beginning, if eternity may worthily be considered to imply succession; in every place, if He who is a Spirit can have relations with space. It is right to speak of His Being and Attributes, if He be not rather super-essential; it is true to say that He is wise or powerful, if we may consider Him as other than the most simple Unity. He is truly Three, if He is truly One; He is truly One, if the idea of Him falls under earthly number. He has a triple Personality, in the sense in which the Infinite can be understood to have Personality at all. If we know anything of Him,—if we may speak of Him in any way,—if we may emerge from Atheism or Pantheism into religious faith,—if we would have any saving hope, any life of truth and holiness within us,—this only do we know, with this only confession, we must begin and end our worship—that the Father is the One God, the Son the One God, and the Holy Ghost the One God; and that the Father is not the Son, the Son not the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost not the Father.

44. The fault, then, which we must guard against in receiving such Divine intimations, is the ambition of being wiser than what is written; of employing the Reason, not in carrying out what is told us, but in impugning it; not in support, but in prejudice of Faith. Brilliant as are such exhibitions of its powers, they bear no fruit. Reason can but ascertain the profound difficulties of our condition, it cannot remove them; it has no work, it makes no beginning, it does but continually fall back, till it is content to be a little child, and to follow where Faith guides it.

45. What remains, then, but to make our prayer to the Gracious and Merciful God, the Father of Lights, that in all our exercises of Reason, His gift, we may thus use it,—as He would have us, in the obedience of Faith, with a view to His glory, with an aim at His Truth, in dutiful submission to His will, for the comfort of His elect, for the edification of Holy Jerusalem, His Church, and in recollection of His own solemn warning, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; for by the words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

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Appendix Two

Review of Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* in the *Dublin Review* (19 December 1845)

["The Religious Movement," Dublin Review, vol. 19, December 1845, pp. 522–539; portion]

ART. XI—1. An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine. By JOHN HENRY NEWMAN. London: Toovey, 1845 …

… Mr. Newman, on the other hand, has been comparatively removed from active life; his time has been devoted more to study, and his works have long made him known as a scholar versed in the Fathers, and deeply read in ecclesiastical history. His sermons have been the favourite reading of every well-educated Anglican, and have possessed great charms for us; and his theological writings have avowedly influenced the belief and the conduct of great numbers in the English church. In his earlier writings, he gave proof of sincere attachment to the Anglican system; and as in Mr. Oakeley's case, love for that religious communion in which he found himself, was the principle that guided him at last to safety and peace. Extensive reading and varied research have ripened in a thoughtful mind,

during a period of retirement, into thorough, earnest, and loving conviction, the grounds of which are given in the volume before us.

The "Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine," is not a mere production of the day, which derives interest from temporary or from personal considerations. It has been the growth of many years of application to ecclesiastical literature; it contains views that would be striking, and arguments that would be convincing, at any period, and ought to be read independently of its connexion with Mr. Newman's joining the Catholic church.

It will justly seem superfluous to enter into any lengthened notice of this important work, because no doubt it has been by this time in the hands of most of our readers. It is not, therefore, our intention to do so. But we will content ourselves with some few remarks and extracts, for the sake of such as have not enjoyed its perusal. Mr. Newman's book was written before he united himself to the Catholic church; it contains not a theological treatise but an essay. These two facts must be borne in mind; the reader must peruse it, as the description of that process of reasoning, by which his powerful and well-stored mind was brought to full accordance with the Catholic church—not as ideally imagined by those who would have her exactly as she existed in the three first centuries, not even as the lover of mediæval catholicism would restore her—but as she is actually, after the full term of eighteen hundred years, have brought her to the full measure of her natural growth. The author's early sympathies were, we believe originally, with the very primitive church; his study led him to the choice of the first three centuries as the type of the true spouse of Christ. That study, which further pursued, brought him to see in the fourth and fifth centuries, only necessary developments of an earlier age, has at last completed the chain, in his mind, from Nicea to Trent, and to recognise in the existing communion of Rome the descendent and legitimate representative of the apostolic church.

The object of Mr. Newman's work is to show this identity, by proving how naturally, how necessarily, doctrine and practice have progressively expanded from their first meagre or rudimental forms, till what we now see is but the sequence, the continuation, and the completion of what is

traced more faintly in early ecclesiastical records. In executing the task which he has proposed to himself, the author proceeds systematically; first laying down his principles, and then applying them.

First we have an introduction, in which the reasons for undertaking the work are clearly laid down; they may be summarily expressed in this formulæ. There are doctrines which are unhesitatingly admitted to be true, in a clear, definite and fully developed form, as for instance the dogma of the Blessed Trinity as set forth in the Athanasian creed, which yet are not to be found in that distinct expression in writers antecedant to the Nicene council; or like the doctrine of the Eucharist, as it is admitted by many in the Anglican church, one distinguished member of which, in "a memorable sermon," out of one hundred and forty passages from the Fathers quoted in his notes, had only fifteen from Ante-Nicene writers. How are we to account for this? Are we to say that whatever appears on the face of these doctrines, beyond what the three first centuries clearly express, is erroneous? No believer in them will admit this. That they existed in those centuries just as marked and decided as they do now, only that evidences of the fact have been lost? This, though only put by way of hypothesis, is proved incorrect by the evidences which do remain, and which present such vagueness and discrepancies (real or apparent) as contrast most prominently with the distinctness and definiteness of later declarations. A hypothesis may, therefore, be fairly put forward to meet this problem; and if it satisfy all its conditions, it must answer all purposes of removing difficulty, and be entitled to serious consideration. Such a hypothesis is the "Theory of Developments," which Mr. Newman so ably puts forth in the present work.

The theory itself may be thus simply stated. All doctrine was revealed from the beginning, and the deposit of this revelation was left in the Church. But many doctrines did not at once require or receive the attention, because they did not acquire the importance, which circumstances, providentially occurring at a fitting moment, afterwards procured them. Hence, they would indeed exist, but in an undeveloped state, not unlike to the seed or youthful plant, which contains in itself all the essential parts of its after growth, or to the infant that is in reality, though not yet in size or feature, the future man. This comparison is applied to this subject by

Vicentius Lerinensis, the contemporary of St. Augustine. Popular illustrations of this view will at once be obvious to every Catholic. For example, it is clear that the honours to be paid to martyrs and their relics and their places of burial, could not be exhibited till persecution came, and made martyrs; nor would any one, in time of perfect peace, have thought of anticipating and marking out definitely what those honours would be. But there were principles and feelings laid up in the Church, which were sure to come into active display, the moment the circumstances occurred which could give them life; and if Dioclesian, instead of Nero, had been the first persecutor, they would have lain three hundred years dormant, instead of thirty. Till later persecutions drove Anthony and others into the desert, the monastic or cenobitic life was not systematically known or recognized, as a state in the Church. But who does not see, that it is in strict accordance with declarations of our Lord and His Apostles, which were sure, at a fitting opportunity, to develop and produce such a form of virtue. No one, in like manner, can doubt that the papal jurisdiction, though given clearly to Peter, and through him to his successors, was not, and could not, be fully brought out, and displayed, and confirmed, till exigencies arose that called for its exercise—till bishops quarrelled with their patriarchs, or heretics became too strong for local churches, or distant synods oppressed prelates. Had not these things occurred for 300 or 400 years, we should have been comparatively at fault for continuous proof of the exercise of the apostolic authority of the Roman See. But it is enough for us to see that whenever and wherever they did happen, were it in Egypt, or in Spain, or at Constantinople, the aggrieved party, as a matter of course, sought protection from it; and the accused sought to defend itself, and did not protest against the competency of the tribunal chosen for appeal. Occasions thus brought out the power, defined it, strengthened it, showed its uses, its necessity, its divine part in the economy of Christ's Church.

But what we have thus familiarly put forward by way of explanation, is very differently handled in Mr. Newman's pages. There the theory is systematically, and we may say, scientifically explained, from its first principles, and is most variously and most learnedly applied.

The first chapter, "On the development of Ideas," after important general principles, proceeds to lay down seven tests by which a true development

may be distinguished from a false one, in other words, from a corruption. Here, in truth, lies the pith of the work. Protestants will allow that many Catholic doctrines or practices, as now seen, have sprung from what was taught or performed in early ages. But then they consider them to have degenerated into downright abuses by excess as by perversion of object. Thus, the devotion paid to Saints they will allow to have had a germ in the feelings of the primitive Church; but they will assert it to have passed the boundary of a true, legitimate development, and to have become superstition, and even idolatry—therefore, a corruption. The tests which Mr. Newman lays down, and illustrates by many interesting examples, are directed to assay any doctrine, and prove whether it be a development, or a corruption, of that which prevailed in early Christianity. Our only fear is, that some readers, finding this chapter—as well us the two following, "On the development of Christian Ideas," and "On the nature of the argument in behalf of the existing developments of Christianity"—more abstruse and solid than they are accustomed to in modern religious literature, may be deterred from proceeding further in the perusal of the book. But if they will go forward, we promise them in the succeeding chapters, which apply the tests, much gratification, edification, and instruction.

The first test of fidelity in development, "Preservation of Type or Idea," is most beautifully applied, by the comparison of the present state and form of Catholicism, with the Church of the six first centuries. We must make room for the conclusion of the first application, which is to the first three. The author first, at considerable length, with rare erudition and great sagacity, collects the popular accusations advanced against Christianity, by its early enemies. Some of these are analysed with great minuteness, and their exact meaning and origin happily illustrated; and a striking picture is thus worked out of the aspect in which Christianity showed itself to the prejudices of learned, and often amiable men, like Pliny, in these first ages. The application of this type or idea is made in the following powerful passage:

> On the whole I conclude as follows:—if there is a form of Christianity now in the world which is accused of gross superstition, of borrowing its rites and customs from the heathen, and of ascribing to forms and ceremonies an occult virtue;—a religion which is considered to burden

and enslave the mind by its requisitions, to address itself to the weak-minded and ignorant, to be supported by sophistry and imposture, and to contradict reason and exalt mere irrational faith;—a religion which impresses on the serious mind very distressing views of the guilt and consequences of sin, sets upon the minute acts of the day, one by one, their definite value for praise or blame, and thus casts a grave shadow over the future;—a religion which holds up to admiration the surrender of wealth, and disables serious persons from enjoying it if they would;—a religion, the doctrines of which, be they good or bad, are to the generality of men unknown; which is considered to bear on its very surface signs of folly and falsehood so distinct, that, a glance suffices to judge of it, and careful examination is preposterous; which is felt to be so simply bad, that it may be calumniated at hazard and at pleasure, it being nothing but absurdity to stand upon the accurate distribution of its guilt among its particular acts, or painfully to determine how far this or that story is literally true, what must be allowed in candour, or what is improbable, or what cuts two ways, or what is not proved, or what may be plausibly defended; a religion such, that men look at a convert to it with a feeling which no other sect raises except Judaism, Socialism, or Mormonism, with curiosity, suspicion, fear, disgust, as the case may be, as if something strange had befallen him, as if he had had an initiation into a mystery, and had come into communion with dreadful influences, as if he were now one of a confederacy which claimed him, absorbed him, stripped him of his personality, reduced him to a mere organ or instrument of a whole;—a religion which men hate as proselytizing, anti-social, revolutionary, as dividing families, separating chief friends, corrupting the maxims of government, making a mock at law, dissolving the empire, the enemy of human nature, and a conspirator against its rights and privileges;—a religion which they consider the champion and instrument of darkness, and a pollution calling down upon the land the anger of heaven;—a religion which they associate with intrigue and conspiracy, which they speak about in whispers, which they detect by anticipation in whatever goes wrong, and to which they impute whatever is unaccountable;—a religion, the very name of which they cast out as evil, and use simply as a bad epithet, and which from the impulse of self-preservation they would persecute if they could;—if

> there be such a religion now in the world, it is not unlike Christianity as that same world viewed it, when first it came forth from its Divine Author,
>
> —P. 240–242.

It is not our intention to follow Mr. Newman through the application of his other tests. We will only say, in general terms, that they are treated with equal vigour and erudition. We will rather look at the work under another aspect.

That in a volume like the present there may be propositions to which all will not assent, and more which may be misunderstood, or even misrepresented, we are ready to allow. We have already said that it only records the process of reasoning which brought Mr. Newman to the Catholic faith. But no one, we are sure, will read this book as it deserves to be read, without coming to the conclusion, that never did convert come to the Church with mind, soul, and heart, more thoroughly made over to her cause—with a tribute of varied learning and extensive research more cheerfully laid at her feet—with more complete, hearty, and filial allegiance, than this work shows him to have done. It is not a controversial treatise, nor a systematic defence of Catholic doctrines; but it is more and better than this. There is hardly a contested point of faith, which is not introduced, by way of illustration, or in application of principles; and everywhere the Catholic doctrine as now held, and its consequent practice as now followed, are ably and heartily defended. There are no reserves, there is no lingering wish for changes or modifications; but the Catholic system is embraced, and loved with the fervour and simplicity of one trained from infancy to the faith. The defence of communion under one kind, introduced at page 161, will be found most able and convincing. Again, the supremacy of the Holy See, its rights and privileges, are frequently brought forward, and proved, and illustrated from ecclesiastical documents and historical facts, in the ablest manner …

… Mr. Newman has here expressed more happily than probably it has ever been done before, the position assigned to the ever Blessed Mother of our Lord in the devotional feelings of Catholics; unmeasurably lower than that of her Son, but quite as high as heretics in ancient or modern days have

wished to allot to Him. But the passage itself, independent of the noble view which it presents, will not be less interesting on the ground of its evidence, how completely the writer had imbued his heart with Catholic feeling, while he was studying Catholic Truth; how, instead of the cold calculations of even many Catholics, as to the minimum of reverence, affection, and confidence which they may be allowed to show to the Blessed Virgin, he has at once seized upon, mastered, and thoroughly incorporated that tender and sweet devotion which forms the solace, stay, and joy of simple and ardent souls in the Church. It has not been merely the understanding that has brought Mr. Newman into communion with her.

There is much more that we would gladly quote, but we will confine ourselves to giving the concluding paragraph of the book.

> Such were the thoughts concerning the 'Blessed Vision of Peace,' of one whose long-continued petition had been that the Most Merciful would not despise the work of His own Hands, nor leave him to himself;—while yet his eyes were dim, and his breast laden, and he could but employ Reason in the things of Faith. And now, dear Reader, time is short, eternity is long. Put not from you what you have here found; regard it not as mere matter of present controversy; set not out resolved to refute it, and looking about for the best way of doing so; seduce not yourself with the imagination that it comes of disappointment, or disgust, or restlessness, or wounded feeling, or undue sensibility, or other weakness. Wrap not yourself round in the associations of years past; nor determine that to be truth which you wish to be so, nor make an idol of cherished anticipations. Time is short, eternity is long.

… We trust its writer may yet live many years, to see the fruit of his future labours, and even of his past. He has left many behind him not yet of the fold—these likewise must be brought in; and no one will work, we are sure, with more earnestness than he in the noble effort to gain them. It is just two years since this Review contained the following words:—

> Whatever Mr. Newman writes is not only an evidence but a cause, not merely a record but an event. His words may serve to inform us and posterity of the present state of opinion in his Church, or at least of that

portion of it whose standard he bears; but they will carry conviction to the heart of many, and bring them to think as they have not done before on the subject.

This we are sure is the case with respect to the volume before us; many will be led by it to think seriously, and more practically, on the important evidences which it contains. And as we close it, we rejoice most heartily, in now for the first time introducing into our pages the name of its author, as that of a brother in the Faith, and a loving son of the Catholic Church.

Appendix Three

Excerpts from Catholic Orestes Brownson's Critical Article, "Newman's Development of Christian Doctrine" (July 1846), With Responses

[my responses will be in brackets]

Our readers do not need to be informed that the distinguished author of this work on the development of Christian doctrine, has, within the last year, been admitted to the communion of the holy Catholic Church; for who has not heard of the event, and what Catholic heart has it not filled with devout joy and gratitude? Mr. Newman has stood for several years before the public as a man of rare gifts and acquirements he was at the head of a very influential party in the Anglican communion, and appears to have enjoyed a personal esteem, and exerted a personal influence, which seldom fall to the lot of any but the master minds of their age or country. We may well, then, look upon his conversion with more than ordinary gratitude to the great Head of the church, and as an event of more than ordinary significance.

Mr. Newman appears, from all we know of his history, to have commenced his career with sincere attachment to the schismatical communion in which he was born and reared, and to have felt that he owed it all his genius, talents, attainments, labors, and affections; but almost from the first it was seen by close observers that he cherished aspirations and

tendencies which, if faithfully followed, must ultimately lead him out of that communion, or destroy the communion itself by absorbing it in the Catholic Church. Hence the great importance which has been attached to his movements, and the lively interest with which his various publications have been read …

The book before us [Newman's "Development of Christian Doctrine"] appears to have been designed to indicate, to some extent, the process by which its gifted author passed in his own mind from Anglicanism to Catholicity, and to remove the principal objections to the Catholic Church, which he himself had raised in his previous publications. As the production of a strong, active, acute, and cultivated mind, enriched with various but not always well digested erudition, brought up in the bosom of heresy and schism, nurtured with false learning, false philosophy, vague and empty theories, gradually, under divine grace, working its way to the truth which gleams from afar, but which the intervening darkness renders fitful and uncertain; it is a work of more than ordinary interest, and one which the enlightened and philosophic few, fond of psychological researches, and of tracing the operations of sectarian or individual idiosyncrasies, may read perhaps with profit. A Protestant, ignorant, as Protestants usually are, of Catholicity, may even fancy the work substantially Catholic, and regard its theory as a convenient one for the church, and one which she may, without prejudice to any of her claims, if not accept, at least tolerate. It is evident, from the first page of the work, that the author has made up his mind; that he is writing under the full conviction that he must seek admission into the Roman Catholic communion; and that, in his judgment, the theory he is putting forth in justification of the step he has resolved to take is, to say the least, perfectly compatible with Catholic authority and infallibility. He frankly accepts, and in some instances elaborately defends, the principal dogmas and usages of the Catholic Church, and especially those which are in general the most offensive to Protestants; and so little suspicion has he of the unsoundness of his work, so orthodox does he hold it, that he does not scruple, even after his conversion, to publish it to the world. And yet we presume he himself is now prepared to concede, that, when he was writing this book, he was still in the bonds of Protestantism; that he had not as yet set his

foot on Catholic ground; that he had not crossed the Jordan, had not even surveyed the promised land from the top of Mount Pisgah, and that he knew it only by vague rumor and uncertain report. All, to his vision, is dim and confused. He stumbles at every step and stammers at every word. He puts forth a giant's strength, but only to wrestle with phantoms; and gives us learned and elaborate theories to explain facts which he himself shows are no facts,—ingenious and subtle speculations, where all that is needed, or is admissible, is a plain yes or no. From first to last, he labors with a genius, a talent, a learning, a sincerity, an earnestness, which no one can refuse to admire, to develop Protestantism into Catholicity. Vain effort! As well attempt to develop the poisonous sumach into the cedar of Lebanon.

Whatever may have been Mr. Newman's estimation of his work when writing or consenting to publish it, we cannot doubt that he now judges it as we do. He has now a practical and a filial acquaintance with the church. He has been permitted to approach her holy sacraments; he has eaten the "food of angels"; his heart has been elevated and his vision purged. He is now not an alien, but a son, and a son who can have no will but that of his holy mother. No foolish pride of opinion, or mistaken notions of self-respect, can make him cling now to past utterances, because they were his, and labor to defend views which he could have entertained only while yet in ignorance, or, at best, seeing "men only as trees walking." His glory is in getting rid of the old Protestant leaven, and in receiving on the authority of God in the church, all the sacred truths which she believes and teaches, and as she believes and teaches them. He cannot feel that it derogates from true dignity and consistency of character to give up falsehood for truth, or to abandon a once cherished theory, when once seen to be both unnecessary and inadmissible. It implies no reproach to him that he was not able, at the time and under the circumstances, from the position in which his Protestantism had placed him, with the training he had received, and the little recourse he had had to the authorized living teacher, to produce a work less uncatholic, and less open to grave objections. The work is all that he could have reasonably expected it to be; and in refusing to accept it as Catholic, we imply no distrust of the sincerity of his conversion, or of his present orthodoxy.

[Quite the contrary, the work is entirely consistent with the Catholic faith, even though it was written when Newman was still an Anglican. Mr. Brownson's view, which was held by some influential persons in the Church at that time, has been decisively rejected by the Catholic Church at the highest levels, as seen in the abundant documentation in previous sections above. As shown, Newman was expressly defended by Pope St. Pius X in 1908 and exonerated from any charge of theological liberalism, modernism, or lack of "catholicity." Development is not evolution. It is Mr. Brownson's view of the insufficiency and non-Catholic nature of Newman's theory of development that is in error. Presumably, Brownson would have submitted to the judgment of the Church vis-à-vis development and Newman, as a faithful Catholic, for the Church has pronounced even some of its greatest teachers—St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas—to be in error at some points. Pope Pius IX, who took office the very same year this article was written, wrote eight years later, about John Henry Newman:

> As We know that you have already chosen Our beloved son, Father John Henry Newman, to govern that university, We want to approve your choice that this priest, blessed with such wonderful gifts of mind and soul and endowed with piety, sound doctrine, and zeal for the Catholic religion, assume the care and governance of this university and preside over it as Rector.
>
> (Encyclical *Optime Noscitis* [On the Propsed Catholic University of Ireland], section 5, March 20, 1854)

Pope Pius IX made several explicit statements indicating an approval of doctrinal development, as seen above. Since Cardinal Newman never renounced his theory of development, and presumably had plenty time over nine years to cultivate a "practical and a filial acquaintance with the church," we can safely assume that it was Mr. Brownson who was wrong about the *Essay's* alleged lack of orthodoxy]

It is but simple justice to Mr. Newman to say, that it is not for his sake that we are about to point out some objections to his theory of developments. The circumstances under which he wrote, his acknowledged learning and ability, the presumption that he had thoroughly surveyed his ground, and the apparent favor with which his essay has been received by the Catholic

press in England, are not unlikely to convey to Protestant, and perhaps to some partially instructed and speculative Catholic minds, the impression, that, if the theory set forth is not exactly Catholic, it at least contains nothing which a Catholic may not accept. The fact, that the author—whether legitimately or not—comes to Catholic conclusions, that he ends by entering the Catholic communion, that he puts forth his theory expressly for the purpose of removing the obstacles which others may find in following his example, and with this view publishes it to the world even after his conversion, can hardly fail to produce in many minds the conviction that the theory and conclusions are necessarily or at least legitimately connected. And several Protestant reviewers seem actually to entertain this conviction; and they, therefore, hold the theory up to condemnation as the "Romanist" theory; or, as they express themselves, "as the ground on which modern Rome seeks to defend her manifest corruptions of Christian doctrine." It is therefore due both to the church and to Protestants to say, expressly,—and we do so with the highest respect for Mr. Newman, and with warm admiration for the truth, beauty, and force of many of the details of his work,—that his peculiar theory is essentially anticatholic and Protestant.

[It is somewhat common for converts to the Church from Protestantism to be accused of "smuggling into the Catholic Church" false remnants of their former belief-system, and indeed this is true in some cases, if the convert has not been properly educated in Catholicism. The irony here, however, is that Mr. Brownson himself had converted just two years previously, in 1844. Thus his presumption of his own expertise as to what constitutes "Catholic" doctrine and thinking and theology, and what does not, and with regard to Newman's alleged former ignorance and supposed certain adoption of his own views after a year in the Church, appears in retrospect as rather foolhardy and shortsighted. If Brownson had been a bit more familiar with his Church history—Newman, of course, knew it up and down, since it was his specialty—he would have known that Newman's theory of development was not at all inconsistent with St. Vincent's or St. Augustine's in the 5th century, or St. Thomas Aquinas's in the 13th. Blessedly, the papacy and Councils are means by which the Church proclaims on such matters. The First Vatican Council had pronounced

positively on doctrinal development in 1870, six years before Mr. Brownson's own death]

It not only is not necessary to the defence of the church, but is utterly repugnant to her claims to be the authoritative and infallible church of God. A brief examination of some of the principal features of the theory will justify this strong and apparently severe assertion.

Mr. Newman so mixes up in the same category Christian doctrine, theology, and discipline,—matters in their nature distinct, and never confounded by Catholic doctors,—that it is difficult by express quotations to determine his exact meaning,

[Perhaps Mr. Brownson could not *understand* Newman in the first place, then, which would account for his false appraisal]

and those of our readers, who have not read his book must rely somewhat on our judgment and fidelity in representing it. But we are familiar with his subject; we have traveled, under circumstances similar to his own, over the greater part of the ground he brings to view; we embraced, and for years publicly advocated, a theory substantially identical with his own;

[Mr. Brownson's mistake, as indicated here—by his admission that he used to accept development himself—, lies in equating development of doctrine exclusively with Protestantism, as if it is inconsistent with Catholic unchanging dogma. It is not at all. This is a case of "throwing the baby out with the bathwater." Mr. Brownson apparently thought that he had to give up development upon becoming Catholic, and respected Newman's mind enough to believe that he would follow the same course. But the premise is mistaken; therefore Mr. Brownson's negative conclusion is false]

we have studied his book thoroughly and conscientiously; we have, and, as Catholics, can have, no motive for misrepresenting it; and we think the statements we are about to give are such as Mr. Newman himself will concede to be strictly just. As we understand Mr. Newman, the problem he has written his book to solve is, How to explain, in accordance with Christian truth, the variations or differences of doctrine and discipline which the Roman Catholic Church presents today, from the doctrine and discipline presented by the primitive church. He does not anywhere draw

up a list or give us a formal statement of these variations and differences; but important variations, not only in discipline, but also in doctrine, he takes it for granted, there have been.

[By "variations or differences" Newman means, of course, developments where the essence or core of a doctrine remains constant; *not* evolution, whereby *one* doctrine transforms itself into *another* doctrine]

Some hypothesis for their explanation, he thinks, is necessary; and the hypothesis he suggests he calls "the Theory of Developments." It is the purpose of his essay, 1. To explain this theory; 2. To furnish the tests by which development may be distinguished from corruption; 3. To establish the probability, a priori, of developments in Christianity; and 4. By an elaborate historical application of the theory to the successive ages of the church, to show that it meets and explains the principal facts in the case. Such is the general design of his work.

We waive, here, all considerations of this theory so far as it is intended to apply to Christian discipline and theology, and confine ourselves to it solely as applied to Christian doctrine. Under this last point of view, we object to the theory that it is a theory, and not a revealed fact. The truth of an hypothesis can never be inferred from the fact that it meets and explains the facts it is invented to meet and explain; and therefore the admission of any hypothesis into Christian doctrine would vitiate the doctrine itself.

[Theories of history are fundamentally different in nature from religious dogmas. Newman was simply setting forth a provisional theory of the history of dogma and seeking to ascertain whether the actual facts of history would fit into his theory. His conclusion was positive, but by the nature of the case, espousal of such a theory is altogether different from assent to Catholic dogmas—dogmas which Newman himself fully accepted, as an obedient and orthodox Catholic]

Mr. Newman begins his work by telling us that

> Christianity has been long enough in the world to justify us in dealing with it as a fact in the world's history. It may legitimately be made the subject-matter of theories: what is its moral and political excellence, what its place in the range of ideas or of facts which we possess, whether

> it be divine or human, whether it be original or eclectic or both at once, how far favorable to civilization or to literature, whether a religion for all ages or for a particular state of society,—these are questions upon the fact or professed solutions of the fact, and belong to the province of opinion.

But in this he must be mistaken. Whether Christianity be divine or human is not a question of opinion, but a question of fact, and so is it with all the questions he enumerates. Christianity is a fact in the world's history; this is a fact. But is Christianity what it professes to be? Is this a question of opinion, to be answered only by a theory? or is it a question of fact, to be taken up and settled, one way or the other, as a fact? If it is a matter of opinion, and if it is answerable only by a theory, what foundation is there or can there be for faith! Christianity is a fact, not only in the world's history, but in itself, or it is not. If it is, it cannot legitimately be made the subject-matter of theories, any more than may be the fact that it is a fact in the world's history. Christianity, if received at all, must be received, not as a theory, but as a revealed fact; and when we have established it as a revealed fact, no theory is needed or admissible, for we must then believe the fact precisely as it proposes itself.

[Again, Mr. Brownson confuses dogmatic theology and mere theorizing about the processes of history and historical theology and development of doctrine. Cardinal Newman suffers from no such confusion. The epistemologies involved are almost completely different. In a later work, from 1870, *An Essay in Aid of A Grammar of Assent,* Newman made very clear his acceptance of all Catholic dogma, in chapter five: "Apprehension and Assent in the Matter of Religion," section 3: "Belief in Dogmatic Theology":

> The "one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church" is an article of the Creed, and an article, which, inclusive of her infallibility, all men, high and low, can easily master and accept with a real and operative assent. It stands in the place of all abstruse propositions in a Catholic's mind, for to believe in her word is virtually to believe in them all. Even what he cannot understand, at least he can believe to be true; and he believes it to be true because he believes in the Church. The *rationale* of this

provision for unlearned devotion is as follows:—It stands to reason that all of us, learned and unlearned, are bound to receive the whole revealed doctrine in all its parts and in all that it implies according as portion after portion is brought home to our consciousness as belonging to it … Thus, as regards the Catholic Creed, if we really believe that our Lord is God we believe all that is meant by such a belief; or, else, we are not in earnest, when we profess to believe the proposition … If we believe in the revelation, we believe in what is revealed, in all that is revealed, however it may be brought home to us, by reasoning or in any other way … He who believes in the *depositum* of Revelation, believes in all the doctrine of the *depositum* … whether he knows little or much, he has the intention of believing all that there is to believe whenever and as soon as it is brought home to him, if he believes in Revelation at all. All that he knows now as revealed, and all that he shall know, and all that there is to know, he embraces it all in his intention by one act of faith; otherwise, it is but an accident that he believes this or that, not because it is a revelation … The word of the Church is the word of the revelation. That the Church is the infallible oracle of truth is the fundamental dogma of the Catholic religion …]

But even if a theory might be introduced, Mr. Newman's would not satisfy us. We are not satisfied with his tests of a true development. He gives seven tests:—1. Preservation of type or idea; 2. Continuity of principles; 3. Power of assimilation; 4. Early anticipation; 5. Logical sequence; 6. Preservative additions; 7. Chronic continuance. The sixth, second, and first are all resolvable into one, the simple preservation of the original type or idea. The third, which implies development by assimilation or accretion, is fatal to the sufficiency of the original revelation, by necessarily implying that the developed idea contains what was not in the idea as originally given.

[This is untrue. The notion does not imply a change of the original, in its essence, but incorporation of elements consistent with it. That is true of trinitarian development, Marian and eucharistic development; any number of things. The latter, e.g., incorporated Aristotelian philosophical thought in order to arrive at the fully developed concept of transubstantiation. Newman explains (emphasis added):

> It grows by taking *into its own substance* external materials; and this absorption or assimilation is completed when the materials appropriated come to *belong* to it or enter into its *unity* … doctrines and views which relate to man are not placed in a void, but in the crowded world, and make way for themselves by impenetration, and develop by *absorption* … So far from the fact of such incorporation implying corruption, as is sometimes supposed, development is a process of incorporation.
>
> (*Essay on Development*, ch. 5, sec. 3, 1–2)]

The fifth, logical sequence, in itself is no proof of development. The fourth, early anticipation, as far as it goes, is proof positive against development. And the seventh, chronic continuance, is as applicable to corruptions as to true developments; for Mr. Newman fails entirely to show that corruptions are short-lived and transitory, as he alleges. Some writers date the origin of the Pelagian heresy, which is as rife as ever it was, as far back as the garden of Eden; and Mr. Newman himself admits that it remains to be seen "whether Mahometanism external to Christendom and the Greek Church within it" are not yet living, and capable of chronic continuance and activity.

Furthermore, before we can proceed to apply tests to determine whether this or that is a development or a corruption of Christian doctrine, we must have a clear, distinct, and adequate knowledge of Christian doctrine itself; for how can we say the original type or idea is preserved, if we do not know what it is? If we do know what it is, what is the use of the tests or their application? The whole process of the historical application of the tests is, then, at best, regarded as an argument, a mere paralogism. We need all the knowledge of Christian doctrine as the condition of concluding any thing from the application of the tests, which their successful application can give us; for there can be nothing in the conclusion not previously in the premises.

[This is thoroughly wrongheaded. Doctrinal development is a fact of history, so seeking laws which govern it, and its characteristics, is not at all improper, impious, or suggestive of a lack of orthodoxy or submission to the Church and its dogmas]

Mr. Newman, like professors of natural science, has been misled by what in these times is called "Inductive Philosophy,"—a philosophy which had never had "a local habitation or a name," more than other "airy nothings," if it had been borne in mind that we have no logic by which we can conclude the unknown from the known. When your conclusions go beyond what you have established in the premises, they may, sometimes be a guide to observation, but they have in themselves no scientific validity.

[The real error in this regard is logical positivism, and that seems to be the presuppositional difficulty of Mr. Brownson]

But, waiving these considerations, we object to Mr. Newman's theory, that it is an hypothesis brought forward to explain facts which are not facts. His problem is no problem; for it presupposes what no Catholic can concede, and what there is no warrant in the facts of the case for conceding. Mr. Newman proceeds on the assumption, that there have been real variations in Christian doctrine.

[Newman believes in variations which do not affect the essence (or substance) of any doctrine, which is present complete and entire from the first, and remains so ever after. Chalcedonian Christology is far more advanced even than that of the New Testament. Yet all the necessary kernels of it are present in the New Testament. The only "variation" lies in increasing complexity and understanding of the original apostolic deposit]

"On various grounds, then, it is certain," he says, "that portions of the church system were held back in primitive times; and of course this fact goes some way to account for that apparent variation and growth of doctrine, which embarrasses us when we would consult history for the true idea of Christianity; yet it is not the key to the whole difficulty, for the obvious reason, that the variations continue beyond the time when it is conceivable the discipline (disciplina arcani) was in force." And the view on which his book is written, he adds is,—

> "That the increase and expansion of the
> Christian Creed and Ritual, and the
> variations which have attended the process
> in the case of individuals and churches, are

necessary attendants on any philosophy or policy which takes possession of the intellect and heart, and has had any wide or extended dominion; that, from the nature of the human mind, time is necessary for the full comprehension and perfection of great ideas; and that the highest and most wonderful truths, though communicated once for all to the world by inspired teachers, could not be comprehended all at once by the recipients, but, as received by minds not inspired, and through media which were human, have required only the longer time and the deeper thought for their full elucidation. This may be called the Theory of Developments."

"We shall find ourselves unable," he says again, "to fix an historical point at which the growth of doctrine ceased. Not on the day of Pentecost, for St. Peter had still to learn at Joppa about the baptism of Cornelius; not a Joppa and Caesarea, for St. Paul had to write his Epistles; not on the death of the last apostle, for St. Ignatius had to establish the doctrine of Episcopacy, not then, nor for many years after, for the canon of the New Testament was still undetermined; not in the Creed, which is no collection of definitions, but a summary of certain credenda, an incomplete summary, and, like the Lord's Prayer or the Decalogue, a mere sample of divine truths, especially of the more elementary. No one doctrine can be named which starts omnibus numeris, at first, and gains nothing from the investigations of faith

> and the attacks of heresy. The church went forth from the world in haste, as the Israelites from Egypt, 'with their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.'" "Butler of course was not contemplating the case of new articles of faith, or developments imperative on our acceptance, but he surely bears witness to the probability of developments in Christian doctrine considered in themselves, which is at present the point in question."
>
> "Thus we see how, as time went on, the doctrine of Purgatory was opened upon the apprehension of the church, as a portion or form of penance due for sins committed after baptism: and thus the belief in this doctrine and the practice of infant baptism would grow into general reception together."

These passages do not appear in their full strength, detached, as they are, from the context; but we think there is no mistaking the doctrine they inculcate. They prove clearly that Mr. Newman does not mean simply that there has been a growth in theological science, a variation or expansion of outward discipline, but that there have been in the teachings of the church herself real variations of doctrine, an increase and expansion of the Christian creed,—a real progress of the church in her own apprehension and understanding of the sacred deposit of faith committed to her charge, and which she received the command to teach all nations even unto the consummation of the world.

[Of course there is an increase of understanding. That is self-evident, and has always been true: in Jewish history, and in the New Testament as well. The Holy Spirit guides and leads the Church into a fuller understanding as time goes on. Eight years after Mr. Brownson wrote, the Church declared

the Immaculate Conception to be an *ex cathedra* infallible doctrine. That was a development, and Pope Pius IX referred to such development in the definition itself. Newman makes this clear, particularly in his words above:

> … for the *full comprehension* and perfection of great ideas; and that the highest and most wonderful truths, though communicated once for all to the world by inspired teachers, could not be *comprehended all at once* …]

She went forth in haste, her "dough unleavened," her creed incomplete, her understanding of her faith imperfect, ignorant, in part at least, in regard to every article of faith, of the precise truth she was authorized to teach. New definitions are new developments, and indicate that more of Christian truth is opened upon the apprehension of the church. Before she defines the article, she herself does not clearly and distinctly apprehend what, on the point defined, is the revelation she originally received. As if she had only a confused notion, an intense feeling, and no distinct apprehension of the consubstantiality of the Son to the Father when she drew up the symbol, and not till she defined it against Arius at Nicaea; and when she defined the "two natures in one person" against Nestorius, she had not yet fully learned the "one person in two distinct natures," which she asserted shortly after against Eutyches. All may have been implied in the original revelation, but she knew it not; and it is only as time goes on, as mind acts on mind, as controversies arise, as urgent necessities press, that she gradually develops it, and fixes it in her definitions.

[Yes; it is utterly obvious that if the Church had known or fully comprehended all along the fuller expositions of various doctrines that She produced in Her Councils, over against heretics, then all of the pronouncements could have been written in Scripture itself, or declared at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) thus saving everyone a lot of trouble and work. But that is simply not how Church history has occurred. These facts are undeniable]

Thus in her understanding there is a perpetual growth, or a continued increase and expansion of Christian doctrine. The decision of the rule of faith, he tells us, "has been left to time, to the influence of mind upon mind, the issues of controversy and the growth of opinion," and remains, he supposes, even to this day, "more or less undeveloped, or at least undefined

by the church." Infant baptism was "unprovided for by the revelation, as originally given." It is left undecided, "unless by development or growth" of revelation, what is the resource of those who sin after baptism, and the doctrine of Purgatory appears to have been a late development …

… Now, in regard to all this, we simply ask, Does the church herself take this view? Does she teach that she at first received no formal revelation,—that the revelation was given as "unleavened dough," to be leavened, kneaded, made up into loaves of convenient size, baked and prepared for use by her, after her mission began, and she had commenced the work of evangelizing the nations? Does she admit her original creed was incomplete, that it has increased and expanded, that there have been variation and progress in her understanding of the revelation she originally received, and that she now understands it better, and can more readily define what it is than she could at first? Most assuredly not.

[Most assuredly so. The definition of the Immaculate Conception a mere eight years later proved that. It was not absolutely required belief before that time, for a Catholic. After 1854, it was. In that proclamation, Pope Pius IX declared that the Church:

> … strives to investigate and explain them in such a way that the ancient dogmas of heavenly doctrine will be made evident and clear, but will retain their full, integral, and proper nature …

This is precisely what Newman argued in his *Essay*]

She asserts that there has been no progress, no increase, no variation of faith; that what she believes and teaches now is precisely what she has always and everywhere believed and taught from the first.

[In essence, of course. St. Vincent of Lerins (5th c.) was the one who pointed out that the Church "has always and everywhere believed" her doctrines. Yet in the very same work—as we have seen above—he expounded upon doctrinal development. The only inconsistency and difficulty lies in Mr. Brownson's mind and inability to draw the proper distinctions]

She denies that she has ever added a new article to the primitive creed; and affirms, as Mr. Newman himself proves in his account of the Council of Chalcedon, that the new definition is not a new development, a better understanding of the faith, but simply a new definition, against the "novel expressions" invented by the enemies of religion, of what, on the point defined, had always and everywhere been her precise faith.

[This is largely a distinction without a difference. It is what Newman wrote about]

In this she is right, or she is wrong. If right you must abandon your theory of developments; if wrong, she is a false witness for God, and your theory of developments cannot make her worthy of confidence. If you believe her you cannot assert developments in your sense of the term; if you do not believe her, you are no Catholic. This is sufficient to show that Mr. Newman cannot urge his theory as a Catholic, whatever he might do as a Protestant.

[The Church proclaimed otherwise; recently pronouncing Cardinal Newman Venerable, and adopting many of his forward-looking yet thoroughly orthodox ideas in its Second Vatican Council, whereas Mr. Brownson's name is scarcely known]

… Mr. Newman evidently proceeds on the assumption, that Christianity can be abstracted from the church, and considered apart from the institution which concretes it, as if the church were accidental and not essential in our holy religion.

[That is contradicted in his comments in his work, *Grammar of Assent*—noted above]

… It is plain from this that Mr. Newman means to teach that the church, in order to attain to an adequate expression of the Christian idea or of Christian doctrine, must institute and carry on the precise process of development which he has predicated of ideas generally; for he contends, and he told us as much in the beginning, that she is forced to do so by the nature of the human mind itself. The revelation is not and cannot be taken in all at once. The church can neither learn nor teach it, except under particular aspects, none of which, he says, can go the depth of the idea,—

that is, we presume, of the fact or no-fact which the idea represents; for it is hardly to be supposed that a judgment cannot go the depth of itself; and it is only by collecting and adjusting these particular aspects, that she can attain to an adequate expression of Christian doctrine. This is naked eclecticism, not in philosophy only, but even in faith.

[Newman's notions are scarcely different than those of St. Thomas Aquinas:

> And these errors, for all that, exercised the talents of the faithful toward a more diligent penetration and understanding of divine truth …
>
> (*Summa contra Gentiles*, IV, ch.55, [9])

… Whoever glances at Mr. Newman's application of his "tests" cannot fail to perceive that he regards heresies as having been of essential service to the church in enabling her to develop and fully understand the sacred deposit of faith; and that he sees no peculiar sin in them, but in their anticipating the church, and bringing out and insisting upon a particular aspect of truth, before her hour has come, before she has reached it in the regular course of development …

[To claim that Newman was not opposed to heresies as sinful is a gross calumny. Newman's point is precisely that of St. Thomas Aquinas, above, and that of St. Augustine:

> The things which then were hidden are now sufficiently revealed by the actual events which have followed … even the heretics yield an advantage to those that make proficiency, according to the apostle's saying, "There must also be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" … For while the hot restlessness of heretics stirs questions about many articles of the catholic faith, the necessity of defending them forces us both to investigate them more accurately, to understand them more clearly, and to proclaim them more earnestly; and the question mooted by an adversary becomes the occasion of instruction …
>
> (*The City of God*, Book 16, chapter 2)]

… It is singular that it never occurred to Mr. Newman, that possibly the heretical views which he seems to admire so much were simply corruptions of doctrines which the church had taught before them, and that heresy is the corruption of orthodoxy, and not its raw material …

[This sort of foolish *ad hominem* speculation casts severe doubt on Mr. Brownson's entire critique]

… But he seems to have studied his theory chiefly in the history of the sects, where it is unquestionably applicable, and to have concluded that the church in its life in the world must be governed by a law analogous to the one by which they are governed, and that his theory may apply to her as well as to them …

[Mr. Brownson's sad obsession of charging Newman with an infatuation with heresies is here evident, and self-refuting]

… Most of us who have been brought up Protestants, and have had some literary reputation, when we become converts, in the fervor of the moment, have an almost irresistible impulse to relate our experience, and detail the process by which we have been translated from death unto life. Nothing seems easier to us than to bridge over the gulf which divides the Protestant world from the Catholic, and open an easy passage-way for those whom we have reluctantly left behind. But, alas! few of us can detail the process of our conversion, if we try. We are led by a way we know not, by a hand we see not … The most we can say is, "This one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, I now see." We believe before we reason, and are often carried onward not only without reasoning, but even in spite of it. The reasoning we should subsequently give would be as likely to mislead others as to aid them …

[Here Mr. Brownson betrays a very un-Catholic antipathy to ecumenism, which the Church has decidedly pronounced *against*. Protestants are fellow Christians, by virtue of their baptism, like the schismatic Donatists in the 4th century. To speak of Protestantism as "death" and a Protestant Christian life as "blind" is an outrageous falsehood in and of itself, and contrary to the Catholic Church's teaching. St. Thomas Aquinas also taught much about ecumenism and those "outside" the Church, just as he

did with regard to development. Ecumenism is no more new than development is, but it developed more rapidly in the 20th century, by the Spirit's leading. Furthermore, if conversion stories are worthless, then it is curious that presently quite a revival is taking place in Catholic apologetics, with conversion stories front and center. Mr. Brownson might have frowned upon that, and thought that such converts were merely quasi-Protestants, but those of us who have traveled this road will attest to the great amount of truth we learned as Protestants, and that Catholicism is—far from the *antithesis* of Protestantism—in fact, the fulfillment of the best aspects and highest, most noble aspirations of Protestantism. The Church and Church history have both spoken loudly against Mr. Brownson's opinions, and as he would be the first to urge submission to the Church, we may conclude that his views have been soundly and irreparably defeated]

Appendix Four

Newman Biographer Wilfrid Ward's Remarks Concerning the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1912)

[From *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman,* "Based on his Private Journals and Correspondence," Wilfrid Ward, in Two Volumes, New York and London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1912; vol. 1: 86–88, 156–166, 184–187]

… All this time the 'Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine' was growing. The book gave him infinite trouble, and wore him out mentally and physically. A letter of June 1845 to Mrs. William Froude tells us something of what it cost him:

> Did I tell you I was preparing a book of some sort to advertise people how things stood with me?… Never has anything cost me (I think) so much hard thought and anxiety, though when I got to the end of my "Arians" thirteen years ago, I had no sleep for a week, and was fainting away or something like it day after day. Then I went abroad and that set

> me up. At present I have been four months and more at my new work, and found I had vastly more materials than I knew how to employ. The difficulty was to bring them into shape, as well as to work out in my mind the main principles on which they were to run. I spent two months in reading and writing which came to nothing, at least for my present purpose. I really have no hope it will be finished before the autumn—if then. I have not written a sentence, I suppose, which will stand, or hardly so. Perhaps one gets over sensitive even about style as one gets on in life. My utmost ambition, in point of recreation, is to lay aside the actual writing for three weeks or so in the course of the time, and take to reading and hunting about. Our time is so divided here that I have not above 6 or 7 hours a day at it, and it is so exhausting, I doubt whether I could give more. I am now writing it for the first time, and have done three chapters, out of 4 or 5. Besides re-writing, every part has to be worked out and defined as in moulding a statue. I get on as a person walks with a lame ankle, who does get on and gets to his journey's end—but not comfortably.

The mental tension to which these words bear witness was visible to his friends and comrades. He stood—so the late Father Stanton told me—for hours together at his high desk writing, and seemed to grow ever paler and thinner, while the sun appeared to shine through the almost transparent face. As the task neared its end he would stand the whole day, completing and revising it with the infinite care which was his wont.

This great work is too well known to need full analysis here. It purported directly to justify what were regarded as Roman corruptions and additions to the primitive creed, as legitimate developments. The Anglican creed accepted developments as well as the Roman. The Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon imposed additions to the defined creed as well as the Council of Trent. The Anglicans (as he argued) attempted to arrest this normal principle of intellectual growth; the Roman Church more consistently allowed it to continue its work. But the philosophy of the book went deeper than the theological controversy of the hour. It applied the great principle of life as a test of truth in religion. In a really living system there are changes which, far from being corruptions, are the natural response of a living social body to changing conditions. New questions are asked; new

answers given. But the new answers were but the fuller expression of the original genius of the system. He regards Christianity as an idea with many aspects which were successively elicited and exhibited in fresh opportunities, and as having at the same time its own distinctive and unique genius which every aspect serves to illustrate. It grows into a definite philosophy or system of belief. As circumstances change 'old principles reappear under new forms. It changes with them in order to remain the same. In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often.' Thus he accounts for and justifies the proud claim of the Catholic Church to be semper eadem, in spite of the changes in its outward form and polity—the growth of ritual, the assimilation of extraneous philosophies by its theological schools, the changes in the method pursued in those schools, its fresh definitions of dogma, the varieties in its social standing at different epochs, in the Catacombs, in the theocracy of the thirteenth century, in the apostasy of the nineteenth. Thus he formulates the principle which explains why the Reformers who claimed to do away with the wanton innovations of Rome in religion were by the Church boldly accused of that very crime which they denounced. They discarded later additions and went back to the primitive text of the Scriptures, yet they were roundly styled by Rome, novatores, or innovators. The Protestants had in their antiquarian zeal discarded the principle of life and of true identity. Their rediscoveries from primitive times were for the living Church novelties or dead anachronisms. The Catholic Church herself had the identity of uninterrupted life and genuine growth.

The identity of the Church still in communion with Rome with the Church of earlier ages is presented in three singularly vivid pictures in the course of Newman's work, and they served as the inspiration of his life in after-years. I refer to the historical parallels between the Roman Catholic Church of the nineteenth century and the Church of the chief periods he surveys in his narrative—the Church of the Apostolic period, of the Nicene period, and of the fifth and sixth centuries. In each case the parallel is given in his work after the exhibition of a mass of facts which he had accumulated during many weeks, and we feel the imaginative intellect of

the poet-historian to be burning at white-heat, while the style never loses its self-restraint …

… Newman had, before leaving England, heard from many quarters of the impression made by his 'Essay on Development' on thinkers outside the Church—Protestants, as they were in those days comprehensively called. The following letter from Dr. Gillies, Vicar Apostolic and Archbishop of one of the Scotch districts, written earlier in the year, 1846, bears witness to the effect of its general argument on an Edinburgh audience:

> I received your book late on a Saturday night, and spent a portion of the night in reading it—I introduced it next day from the pulpit to a mixed congregation, and announced at the same time a short course of lectures upon it—My eighth and last lecture was given last evening, and I am most happy to tell you that from first to last, once in spite of the most stormy and trying weather, your Book has secured a very select and crowded attendance. Fully two thirds of those present were Protestants of every description, and there were at least ten men for one woman, and mostly men of education. The lectures generally occupied the best part of two hours each, when they did not considerably exceed that time; yet from first to last your arguments were listened to with the most intense interest, and I have had occasion to hear since from the best authority that very many Protestants were extremely sorry that I so much compressed the matter at the end, as already to have brought our weekly meetings to a conclusion. That a very favourable impression has been made by your essay on the minds of many Protestants I am certain.

It is probable that the nature of Newman's first chapter in the 'Development' Essay had a large share in giving the thoughtful Scotchmen a new idea of the importance of the Catholic Religion and interesting them in the Essay itself. Newman's treatment of the development of a living idea in its relations to the civilisation in which it energises, infused into an old controversy the quality of philosophical imagination. Roman rigidity and the 'variations of Popery' were dealt with as opposite manifestations of the special genius of Catholicism. A deep philosophical principle was suggested

as accounting for phenomena in the Catholic religion which had been so often treated with contempt.

That the philosophical law exhibited in the development of any great idea was manifest in the changes in the external presentation of the Catholic religion from the days of the Apostles to those of Gregory XVI. was Newman's constant contention. As the idea remains identical in spite of all changes in that environment which determines its actual expression, so was the Catholic religion, he argued, ever essentially the same through all the changes in its external manifestations and status, and in the method of the theological schools. Of the course of that religion may be said in some measure what he says of the development of a living idea itself, 'old principles reappear under new forms. It changes with them in order to remain the same. In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below, to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often.'

The assurance of Archbishop Gillies that the argument of his book had arrested the attention of the Scotch thinkers was very satisfactory and encouraging. He desired to get it authoritatively recognised as orthodox Catholic apologetic. It was all-important, then, to utilise the opportunity of his being in Rome for this purpose.

Moreover, almost at the beginning of his visit to Rome Newman turned his serious attention to the proposal that his own followers should take their place as theologians and apologists of the new age. He considered again the scheme which he and Dalgairns had discussed in England, that Maryvale should be a school of theology. And both in theology and in apologetics the principle of his Essay was in his mind all-important. The acute secularist and anti-religious movement on the Continent was being brought before his eyes. It was the eve of the revolution of '48, in which the anti-clerical spirit was so marked. Rome, on the other hand, stood before him as the living evidence of the continuous existence of Christianity in the Catholic Church, and of its truth. The vigorous life of Rome's old age was on Newman's principles one of the very proofs that its religion was true. Both these spectacles inspired him to complete and coordinate his own philosophy of the development of the Christian Church. 'The maxims and first principles of religion in a perfectly logical mind lead to Rome; their

denial to religious negation'—this was his main contention from 1845 to the end of his life. One set of principles led to the development of religious truth, the other to the development of religious error. Thus the principle of development combined both the evidence for the Catholic Church and the reply to modern agnosticism.

He expressed this position later on in one of his Catholic works as follows:

> The multitude of men indeed are not consistent, logical or thorough; they obey no law in the course of their religious views; and while they cannot reason without premisses, and premisses demand first principles, and first principles must ultimately be (in one shape or another) assumptions, they do not recognise what this involves, and are set down at this or that point in the ascending or descending scale of thought, according as their knowledge of facts, prejudices, education, domestic ties, social position, and opportunities for inquiry determine; but nevertheless there is a certain ethical character, one and the same, a system of first principles, sentiments and tastes, a mode of viewing the question and of arguing, which is formally and normally, naturally and divinely, the organum investigandi given us for gaining religious truth, and which would lead the mind by an infallible succession from the rejection of atheism to theism, and from theism to Christianity, and from Christianity to Evangelical Religion, and from these to Catholicity.
>
> [Note 5: This statement of the case was added as an appendix to the later editions of the *Grammar of Assent* in reply to a misrepresentation of Newman's argument which appeared in the London daily Press]

Newman desired, if he resumed his work for theology, to draw out this argument scientifically both as a strong weapon in the hands of the Christian apologist and for the benefit of inquirers and sceptics. The task of teaching divinity to theological students would be exactly the opportunity he wanted to bring out clearly and persuasively his philosophy of faith and to instil it into the rising generation—a far more effective mode of influence than mere controversy, with its attendant misunderstandings. Yet for men, however acknowledged their intellectual eminence, to aspire to teach divinity when they were but recent converts, must, he felt, appear bold. In England the converts, though so well received

at the colleges, were, he gradually learnt, already viewed with some suspicion by the bulk of English Catholics. On the other hand, they were absolutely trusted by one man of genius among their English co-religionists —Bishop Wiseman. And the scheme, both in itself and in its ultimate object of stemming the tide of modern infidelity, had been Wiseman's own. Moreover, Wiseman was by education and traditions a Roman. The hope arose that the views he and Newman shared might find special support in Rome; and armed with authority from the Holy See Newman might successfully accomplish what else it would be extravagant to think of attempting. The root-principles of his religious philosophy were sketched in the sermons on Faith and Reason known as the 'Oxford University Sermons,' of which he wrote that he considered it, though incomplete, the best book that he had ever written [p. 58]. The superstructure was indicated in the 'Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine.'

The first thing, then, was to ascertain how these works were viewed in Rome. And there was a difficulty from the start, for no theologian in the city read English with any facility. The 'Development' Essay, as the work immediately leading to his conversion, naturally came first under consideration, and Dalgairns arranged to have it translated into French. A similar proposal was made a little later as to a selection from the Sermons.

But all this while there was a country besides England itself in which English was read, America. And the practical people inhabiting that country were first introduced to the 'Essay on Development' by the Unitarians, who quoted it as evidence that the Trinitarian doctrine was not primitive, but was a development of the third century. An outcry followed—the narrow and vigorous Dr. Brownson taking the matter up in his Review; and echoes of the outcry found their way to Rome. Further, the 'Development' Essay—which, though finished when he was convinced of the truth of Catholicism, was, strictly speaking, a work of Newman's Anglican life—was not separated by the popular hubbub in Rome or in America from his other Anglican works, written in the days when Rome was hateful to him. Strong sayings were quoted from the 'Prophetical Office' as to the papacy being Antichrist and Romanism 'possessed by the devil.' Echoes reached Rome, within a fortnight of his arrival, of ignorant clamour in America of a kind which it is hopeless to deal with—in which

misunderstanding acquires the heat of righteous wrath, and to listen to explanation is held to be like giving ear to the tempter. All this was the more disappointing because Newman had found immediately on his arrival that the all-important principle of 'Development,' the fact that it was a vera causa, was admitted by the Roman theologians; and he had hoped that the question of its extent as evidenced by the facts of history could be discussed calmly. The American outcry prevented for the moment any such calm discussion and seems to have scared the Romans. Controversial exigencies naturally held an important place in the city which was the centre of the government of a militant Church, and thus the report that Newman's book had given the Unitarians big and effective guns created prejudice. All this was most annoying and discouraging for Newman. He was determined not to press his view publicly without Roman support, but he at once took steps to let the Americans know that at least in principle his theory was accepted in Rome. A fortnight after his arrival Newman refers to the situation in a letter to Dalgairns:

> Collegio di Propaganda: November 15, 1846.
>
> 'My dear Dalgairns,—Knox writes me word that the whole American Church, all the Bishops I think, are up in arms against my book. They say it is half Catholicism half infidelity. Of course they know nothing of antiquity or of the state of the case; … but their extreme violence—for Knox calls it a storm—shows that I am quite right in writing to Knox what people think here before I now commit myself publicly to what yet I see no reason whatever to relinquish privately. All I have heard about my book here has been from two professors, one dogmatic of the Collegio Romano, (Jesuits). They evidently have been influenced by the American opposition which is known in Rome; but what they say after all is not much. They admit the principle of development but say I have carried it too far, judging by bits translated for them. When I asked for instances they took the part of Bull against Petavius and said Petavius went too far and retracted. I pressed them whether I had been too far on the subject of the Pope's supremacy, but they didn't seem to know more of the book than the above. They said that the American Unitarians availed themselves of my admissions. This both showed whence their objection to me came, and also explained the cause of the

American irritation. The Socinians of Boston urge them with bits of my book; they are not divines enough to know whether or not they should take my theory, and therefore are simply at a disadvantage. I suspect this is the state of the case. Also I fancy the book may be too ultramontane for our American friends, and too much representing the Church as against government.

However it is clear that (though I don't think it will come to this) I must not be the propounder of a new theory on so grave a subject without any encouragement to believe that I am concurring in the Roman traditions …

Ever yours affectionately,
J. H. NEWMAN.

As Newman learnt more of the state of opinion in Rome and among Catholics elsewhere, the situation became more tantalising. His Oxford University Sermons made a great and most favourable impression among the theologians in some quarters—notably in France. Then, again, the neo-scholastic philosophical revival had not yet begun, and Rosmini had been urging the need of a religious philosophy specially suited to the age. The absence then of any existing generally accepted rival system (for he learnt on all hands that there was none) seemed at first sight to give Newman the opportunity for urging his own views. Moreover, Newman found that what was taught on 'Faith and Reason' and on 'Development' by Father Perrone, the chief theological Professor in Rome, went in its general direction on lines with which he himself entirely concurred. Again, one of the most important points in Newman's own philosophy—the idea of "wisdom" as the outcome of deep thought in the Christian Church on the whole field of knowledge under the guidance of the Spirit of Wisdom, and as the special gift of the perfect—he found accepted in substance by a representative theologian with whom he conversed.

Yet in the end it proved that, while he understood, and claimed as in accord with his own thought, so many of the views of the ablest Roman professors, some of the most influential among them did not understand him and hesitated to accept his teaching. His terminology was different from theirs; and when thought advanced to further issues than they had

already contemplated, even though the consideration of such issues was Newman's response to questions raised by the thinking world, these minds, so acute up to a certain point, appeared to him to stop short abruptly.

Moreover, what was not understood was at once wrongly characterised by its adverse critics: they gave it a label from their own stock in trade, and it was then declared to be untenable. His language on 'probability'—in which the essential contrast was really between demonstrative evidence and circumstantial or cumulative evidence—was interpreted as a denial, with Hermes, of the possibility of getting beyond probability and attaining to certainty on matters of religion. It availed not that Newman found precisely his own view in so approved a writer as De Lugo. De Lugo points out that while our belief in revelation, in so far as it depends on the Word of God, is most certain, nevertheless its ultimate premiss is our belief that God has in fact spoken. This is a matter of circumstantial evidence and not of demonstration. And it is less clear and cogent than our belief (for example) in the existence of India, which rests on human testimony, and is also a question of moral proof and not of demonstration. Newman held that his own position no more disparaged religious certainty than De Lugo's, but his terminology made his view suspect. Some of his critics, adhering to the language of the thirteenth century, with its passion for syllogism, seemed to him to be ready to lose an important truth and ignore undeniable facts rather than admit a new expression.

Newman's language about Faith was confused by others with the condemned fideism of M. Bautain. So, too, on the question of actual development of doctrine he could not get the Roman professors who criticised him to face clearly his difficulties, and his critics accused him of holding that the Church could define what was simply not in the tradition. His position was, of course, that what was implicitly present from the first, as being an 'aspect of the idea' handed down by tradition, might be at a given time denied by those who did not yet master intellectually all the implications of this tradition. And yet at the same time, while Roman divines failed to accept the view in the abstract, they were defending it in the concrete. Perrone was maintaining that the Immaculate Conception—which such representative Doctors as St. Bernard and St. Thomas had declared not to be in the tradition—could nevertheless be defined. Again,

Perrone did admit the difference between moral and demonstrative evidence; yet many demurred to Newman's own expressions, which meant no more. And these criticisms were, he learnt, based on scraps of his writings, which were not understood in their context. All this tried and perplexed him. The customary exposition on these questions was that left as a legacy by acute minds; but it stopped short here and there, he thought, of issues which had since become pressing. On difficulties long familiar the current textbooks had the accepted answer, often expressed extremely well. A new point of view, however, those divines who criticised him seemed not to realise. To acquiesce in this state of things was, he said, to abandon the dream of an apologetic adequate to meet the growing infidelity of the age.

Yet, on the other hand, Newman, whose great desire was to work under authority, could not undertake a campaign against a phase of theological thought which tried him. He did indeed urge privately that the philosophy he advocated, based as it was on generalisations from the history of thought within the Church herself, though unfamiliar to Catholics in its form, was in substance unquestionably in harmony with Catholic traditions. He urged that it ought to be given time to develop and explain itself. Whereas it was instead hastily judged by a customary mode of speaking which did not allow for it, and by an interpretation of its phraseology which was alien to its true nature. That authority should condemn or check what he believed to be essential for the defence of Christian faith in new circumstances, before it had been given time to make itself understood, would be in his eyes a misfortune. Yet he feared that this might occur if he pressed his points too insistently. Moreover, he thought he saw signs that the views of Roman divines were in a state of transition. He found, to his surprise, that both St Thomas and Aristotle were now out of favour in Rome. Philosophising in general was suspect. It was clear that such views were not likely to be permanent. A little patience was needed. When, therefore, it became finally evident to him that he could not, for the time at least, win general and hearty support among the Roman theologians for his writings on these subjects, he determined to abandon the scheme of founding a theological college as at least premature, and simply to leave his books to make their own way gradually.

At first he thought of laying his own view of the situation before the Pope himself. But this idea he soon abandoned. Some years would have to be allowed for what he had already written to be weighed and understood. It must then come to be generally realised that what Rome already admitted as to Development in such cases as the prerogatives of the Papacy and the Immaculate Conception, really conceded principles for which Newman was contending, and which the theologians who opposed him hesitated explicitly to grant. Moreover, on Faith and Reason his terminology was the real gravamen. His own analysis was not opposed in essence to that of the schools, but rather was engineered by a different line of approach—starting from the psychological side where the heirs to scholasticism started from the logical side. Certain principles familiar to Oxford were, he said, new to Rome. They must be understood before his works could be themselves accurately taken in. Without such preparation, his drift being misconceived, he might even be censured—a painful commencement of his Catholic life …

… In point of fact, Newman, although he had abandoned the idea of teaching theology and further pressing the arguments in his work on Development, was still extremely anxious to secure the imprimatur of Perrone for his theory. And this important matter of technical theology divided his attention with the plans for a future Oratory in England. They had much discussion together, and Newman wrote a summary of his argument in Latin and sent it to Perrone.

The result was satisfactory, for Perrone's main objection was confined to Newman's expression 'new dogmas' in place of 'new definitions.' Newman was using the phrase 'dogma' to denote the explicit intellectual concept expressed in a new definition. Perrone seems to have taken it as tantamount to new truth added to what was at first revealed to the Church. This was a difference almost entirely of expression. In principle they agreed. Both held that the 'deposit of the Faith' once for all committed to the Church was so given that Christians were not explicitly conscious of all its intellectual implications, which were subsequently defined. The 'dogma' was given once for all, but its explication, which made it more distinctly understood by the faithful, was a matter of time.

Perrone's summary of his own criticism on Newman's tractate is appended to the MS., and runs thus:

> What I have above noted may be reduced to the following: (1) that the Church was always conscious of the whole depositum committed to her of all the truths of faith, (2) that this depositum was committed to her as it were in a block and as one revelation, (3) that the truths of faith are not capable of increase in themselves but only of more explicit exposition, (4) that therefore these truths do not grow materially (as the schools speak) and in themselves, but only in relation to our fuller comprehension of them and more distinct knowledge by the definition of the Church, and, as it is generally expressed, not in relation to themselves but in relation to us.

Newman held that this criticism substantially left his position untouched; for if the difference between explicit and implicit knowledge, between the later dogma as defined in distinct dogmatic propositions and the earlier dogma given to the Church as a block and as one revelation, might be so great as to permit (as Perrone held) the definition of the Immaculate Conception, which was long denied by some of the best theologians to be part of the original deposit given 'as a block,' it might well cover all he had said in his Essay. He re-expressed his general theory in 1849 as follows, using the terminology of Perrone:

> It is well known that, though the creed of the Church has been one and the same from the beginning, yet it has been so deeply lodged in her bosom as to be held by individuals more or less implicitly instead of being delivered from the first in those special statements, or what are called definitions, under which it is now presented to us, and which preclude mistake or ignorance. These definitions which are but the expression of portions of the one dogma which has ever been received by the Church, are the work of time; they have grown to their present shape and number in the course of eighteen centuries, under the exigency of successive events, such as heresies and the like, and they may of course receive still further additions as time goes on. Now this process of doctrinal development, as you might suppose, is not of an accidental or random character, it is conducted upon laws, as

everything else which comes from God; and the study of its laws and of its exhibition, or, in other words, the science and history of the formation of theology, was a subject which had interested me more than anything else from the time I first began to read the Fathers, and which had engaged my attention in a special way. Now it was gradually brought home to me, in the course of my reading, so gradually, that I cannot trace the steps of my conviction, that the decrees of later councils, or what Anglicans call the Roman corruptions, were but instances of that very same doctrinal law which was to be found in the history of the early Church; and that in the sense in which the dogmatic truth of the prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin may be said, in the lapse of centuries, to have grown upon the consciousness of the faithful, in that same sense did, in the first age, the mystery of the Blessed Trinity also gradually shine out and manifest itself more and more completely before their minds. Here was at once an answer to the objections urged by Anglicans against the present teaching of Rome; and not only an answer to objections, but a positive argument in its favour; for the immutability and uninterrupted action of the laws in question throughout the course of Church history is a plain note of identity between the Catholic Church of the first ages and that which now goes by that name; just as the argument from the analogy of natural and revealed religion is at once an answer to difficulties in the latter, and a direct proof that Christianity has the same Author as the physical and moral world. But the force of this, to me ineffably cogent argument, I cannot hope to convey to another.

[Note 3: See *Difficulties of Anglicans*, I. pp. 344–346. In a letter to W. G. Ward, written in the same year, he proposes writing further on the subject if he could get Perrone to revise his work. 'I would not do it without the highest sanction,' he writes. 'You see the Pope has in a way taken up Perrone.']

The intercourse with Perrone was of great importance for the future, for Newman could always remember that when he had talked out his views he had found substantial agreement between them, except that Perrone was

unwilling to say 'yea' or 'nay' on certain questions, and did not carry his analysis to the point which Newman's penetrating mind desired.[4]

Notes

[←1]

* The controversy between the English Church and the Church of Rome lies, it is presumed, in the matter of fact, whether such and such developments are true, (e.g. Purgatory a true development of the doctrine of sin after baptism,) not in the principle of development itself.

[←2]

* Hence it is not more than an hyperbole to say that, in certain cases, a lie is the nearest approach to the truth. [Vide Hist. of Arians, p. 67, &c. Edit. 3.] We are told that “God is not the son of man, that He should repent;” yet “it repented the Lord that He had made man.”

[←3]

* The senses convey to the mind “substantial truth,” in so far as they bring home to us that certain things are, and in confuso what they are. But has a man born blind, by means of hearing, smelling, taste, and touch, such an idea of physical nature, as may be called substantially true, or, on the contrary, an idea which at best is but the shadow of the truth? For, in whichever respect, whether as in substance or by a shadow, the blind man knows the objects of sight, in the same are those things, in “which eye has not seen, nor ear heard,” apprehended by us now, “in a glass darkly,” per speculum, in aenigmate.

[←4]

Armstrong, D. (2007). *Development of Catholic Doctrine: Evolution, Revolution, or an Organic Process?* (pp. 1–198). Dave Armstrong.